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**English Literature for Secondary Schools**  
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**MAID MARIAN**



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TORONTO

# Maid Marian

By

Thomas Love Peacock

*With Introduction, Notes, etc., by*

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MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED  
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1912

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NOTE.—The text in this edition has been reduced by the omission of two episodes and a few passages of minor importance.

## INTRODUCTION

' Robyn was a proude outlawe,  
Whyles he walked on grounde,  
So curteyse an outlawe as he was one  
Was never none yfounde.'

THE story of Robin Hood and his merry men has for centuries been a favourite in England. Nor is this wonderful; for, besides the charm of the greenwood and the spirit of spring that runs through the Ballads, there is the character of Robin himself. The chivalrous brigand, courteous to women, perfect as an archer, who loves danger or a practical joke, and, above all, who robs only the rich to give to the poor, is of the same family as Dick Turpin, Tom Faggus, or any other of the highwaymen who live in tradition or in fiction; whilst, if noble birth be added, (as it was subsequently to Robin), no quality is lacking to the ideal of the English populace.

The question of Robin Hood's historical existence need not trouble us here. For whether this King Arthur of the common people (as he has been called) arose out of dim memories of Hereward the Wake, or whether, as seems more likely, there was some such outlaw living in the reigns of Henry II., Richard I. and John (or possibly in that of Edward II.), at any rate this much is certain: that the ballads celebrate the deeds of more than one bold outlaw, and that Robin is an idealized hero, around whose name grew up a whole cycle of ballads.



Peacock, in *Maid Marian*, follows chiefly one long ballad, called *A Little Geste* [history] of *Robin Hood and his Meiny* [company], which was printed by Wynken de Worde, Caxton's pupil and successor, before the end of the fifteenth century. But Robin's popularity is shown, as early as 1360, by the fact that Sloth, in *Piers the Plowman* (v. 402), knows 'rymes of Robyn Hood,' although he knows not perfectly his paternoster.

This popularity was increased by Robin's connexion with the mumming-plays performed by strolling actors up and down the country, especially on May Day. It is owing to these plays that Robin Hood's name has been given to bays and hills and public-houses in half the counties of England, and that it was formerly common in oaths and proverbs. As an illustration of their importance may be quoted the following well-known passage from one of Bishop Latimer's sermons before King Edward VI.: 'I came once myselfe to a place riding on a journey homeward from London, and I sent word overnight into the town that I would preach there in the morning, because it was a holy-day, and methought it was an holidayes worke; the churche stode in my way, and I toke my horsse and my companye and went thither; I thought I should have found a great companye in the churche, and when I came there the churche dore was faste locked. I tarried there half an houre and more, and at last the keye was founde; and one of the parishe comes to me, and sayes, Syr, thys ys a busye day with us, we cannot heare you; it is Robyn Hoodes Day. The parishe are gone abroad to gather for Robyn Hood,<sup>1</sup> I pray you let [hinder] them not. I was fayne [obliged] there to geve place to Robyn Hood. I thought my rochet [a vestment worn by bishops] should have been regarded, though I were not; but it woulde not serve, it was fayne to geve place to Robyn Hoodes Men. It is no laughyng matter, my friendes, it is a wepyng matter, a heavy matter.

<sup>1</sup> To collect for the expenses of May Day festivities.

under the pretence for gatherynge for Robyn Hooode, a traytoure and a thefe, to put out a preacher, to have his office lesse estemed, to pfefer Robyn Hooode before the mynystration of God's word.'

Robin has figured frequently in English literature. Ben Jonson's unfinished play, *The Sad Shepherd*, is 'a tale of Robin Hood.' Scott introduced him as Locksley in *Ivanhoe*, a work which, curiously enough, was contemporary with *Maid Marian*—though the two were quite independent.<sup>1</sup> Tennyson's *Foresters* is a modern version of the story; and one has only to read that play to realize what a vigorous and sympathetic account of Robin Peacock has given us in *Maid Marian*. Not that the book is in any sense historical. Peacock himself called it 'a comic Romance of the twelfth century, which I shall make the vehicle of much oblique satire on the oppressions that are done under the sun,' a sentence in which he states the main characteristics of all his work,—satire being the most striking.

Of Peacock himself (1785-1866) not much need be said here. He was a man of great scholarship and general ability. But his works are not the sort to be ever widely popular, although those who do like them are very warm in their admiration. Most people know the excellent War Song of Dinas Vawr (from the *Misfortunes of Elphin*):

'The mountain sheep are sweeter,  
But the valley sheep are fatter';

indeed some of his short poems (e.g. some in *Maid Marian*) are amongst his best work.

Peacock's life was not eventful. Like Charles Lamb, he was an official of the East India Company, in which capacity he was most successful; thus, in spite of his dislike for modern 'progress,' he brought about the first service of

<sup>1</sup> Peacock wrote *Maid Marian* (except for the last three chapters) in 1819, but did not publish it till 1822; *Ivanhoe* was published in Dec. 1819.

steamships to India. He was an intimate friend of Shelley, whose life he has written ; whilst his daughter married another great poet and novelist, George Meredith.<sup>1</sup>

*Maid Marian* has been, perhaps, the most read of Peacock's works. This popularity is due partly to its own merits, partly to its being made—without any leave from Peacock—the basis of the libretto for a comic opera, which was successfully produced at Covent Garden in Dec. 1822. The book possesses excellent dramatic qualities, moves with a lively spirit, and is full of witty repartee, all the better for its incongruity with the twelfth century. Indeed, there is no attempt at antiquities ; and the right spirit in which to read the book is that in which it was written, one of delight in the rough-and-tumble adventures of Robin and Friar Tuck, the breezy charm of Marian, and, above all, the beauty of a May morning in the greenwood :

‘In somer when the shawes be sheyne, [woods are bright]  
And leves be large and long,  
Hit is full mery in feyre foreste  
To here the foulys song :

To se the dere draw to the dale,  
And lete the hilles hee,  
And shadow hem in the levys grene,  
Under the grene-wode tre.’

<sup>1</sup> There are distinct likenesses between some of Meredith's work and Peacock's. Cf. especially the handling of an old tradition in *Farina* with that in *Maid Marian* or *The Misfortunes of Elphin*.

# MAID MARIAN

## CHAPTER I

'THE abbot, in his alb arrayed,' stood at the altar in the abbey-chapel of Rubygill, with all his plump, sleek, rosy friars, in goodly lines disposed, to solemnise the nuptials of the beautiful Matilda Fitzwater, daughter of the Baron of Arlingford, with the noble Robert Fitz-Ooth, Earl of Locksley and Huntingdon. The abbey of Rubygill stood in a picturesque valley, at a little distance from the western boundary of Sherwood Forest, in a spot which seemed adapted by nature to be the retreat of monastic mortifica- 10 tion, being on the banks of a fine trout-stream, and in the midst of woodland coverts, abounding with excellent game. The bride, with her father and attendant maidens, entered the chapel; but the earl had not arrived. The baron was amazed, and the bridemaids were disconcerted. Matilda feared that some evil had befallen her lover, but felt no diminution of her confidence in his honour and love. Through the open gates of the chapel she looked down the narrow road that wound along the side of 20 the hill; and her ear was the first that heard the

distant trampling of horses, and her eye was the first that caught the glitter of snowy plumes, and the light of polished spears. 'It is strange,' thought the baron, 'that the earl should come in this martial array to his wedding'; but he had not long to meditate on the phenomenon, for the foaming steeds swept up to the gate like a whirlwind, and the earl, breathless with speed, and followed by a few of his yeomen, advanced to his smiling bride.

10 It was then no time to ask questions, for the organ was in full peal, and the choristers were in full voice.

The abbot began to intone the ceremony in a style of modulation impressively exalted, his voice issuing most canonically from the roof of his mouth, through the medium of a very musical nose newly tuned for the occasion. But he had not proceeded far enough to exhibit all the variety and compass of this melodious instrument, when a noise was heard  
20 at the gate, and a party of armed men entered the chapel. The song of the choristers died away in a shake of demisemiquavers, contrary to all the rules of psalmody. The organ-blower, who was working his musical air-pump with one hand, and with two fingers and a thumb of the other insinuating a peeping-place through the curtain of the organ-gallery, was struck motionless by the double operation of curiosity and fear; while the organist, intent only on his performance, and spreading all his  
30 fingers to strike a swell of magnificent chords, felt his harmonic spirit ready to desert his body on

being answered by the ghastly rattle of empty keys, and was preparing to restore harmony with the corner of a book of anthems on the head of his neglectful assistant, when his hand and his attention together were arrested by the scene below. The voice of the abbot subsided into silence through a descending scale of long-drawn melody, like the sound of the ebbing sea to the explorers of a cave. In a few moments all was silence, interrupted only by the iron tread of the armed intruders, as it rang 10 on the marble floor and echoed from the vaulted aisles.

The leader strode up to the altar; and placing himself opposite to the abbot, and between the earl and Matilda, in such a manner that the four together seemed to stand on the four points of a diamond, exclaimed, 'In the name of King Henry, I forbid the ceremony, and attach Robert, Earl of Huntingdon as a traitor!' and at the same time he held his drawn sword between the lovers, as if to 20 emblem that royal authority which laid its temporal ban upon their contract. The earl drew his own sword instantly, and struck down the interposing weapon; then clasped his left arm round Matilda, who sprang into his embrace, and held his sword before her with his right hand. His yeomen ranged themselves at his side, and stood with their swords drawn, still and prepared, like men determined to die in his defence. The soldiers, confident in superiority of numbers, paused. The abbot took 30 advantage of the pause to introduce a word of

exhortation. 'My children,' said he, 'if you are going to cut each other's throats, I entreat you, in the name of peace and charity, to do it out of the chapel.'

'Sweet Matilda,' said the earl, 'did you give your love to the Earl of Huntingdon, whose lands touch the Ouse and the Trent, or to Robert Fitz-Ooth, the son of his mother?'

10 'Neither to the earl nor his earldom,' answered Matilda, firmly, 'but to Robert Fitz-Ooth and his love.'

'That I well knew,' said the earl; 'and though the ceremony be incomplete, we are not the less married in the eye of my only saint, our Lady, who will yet bring us together. Lord Fitzwater, to your care, for the present, I commit your daughter. Nay, sweet Matilda, part we must for a while; but we will soon meet under brighter skies, and be this the seal of our faith.'

20 He kissed Matilda's lips, and consigned her to the baron, who glowered about him with an expression of countenance that showed he was mortally wroth with somebody; but whatever he thought or felt he kept to himself. The earl, with a sign to his followers, made a sudden charge on the soldiers, with the intention of cutting his way through. The soldiers were prepared for such an occurrence, and a desperate skirmish succeeded. Some of the women screamed, but none of them fainted; for fainting  
30 was not so much the fashion in those days, when the ladies breakfasted on brawn and ale at sunrise,







A rolling chaos of animated rotundities.

[See page 5.

as in our more refined age of green tea and muffins at noon. Matilda seemed disposed to fly again to her lover, but the baron forced her from the chapel. The earl's bowmen at the door sent in among the assailants a volley of arrows, one of which whizzed past the ear of the abbot, who, in mortal fear of being suddenly translated from a ghostly friar into a friarly ghost, began to roll out of the chapel as fast as his bulk and his holy robes would permit, roaring 'Sacrilege!' with all his monks at his heels, 10 who were, like himself, more intent to go at once than to stand upon the order of their going. The abbot, thus pressed from behind, and stumbling over his own drapery before, fell suddenly prostrate in the doorway that connected the chapel with the abbey, and was instantaneously buried under a pyramid of ghostly carcasses, that fell over him and each other, and lay a rolling chaos of animated rotundities, sprawling and bawling, in unseemly disarray, and sending forth the names of all the saints 20 in and out of heaven, amidst the clashing of swords, the ringing of bucklers, the clattering of helmets, the twanging of bow-strings, the whizzing of arrows, the screams of women, the shouts of the warriors, and the vociferations of the peasantry, who had been assembled to the intended nuptials, and who, seeing a fair set-to, contrived to pick a quarrel among themselves on the occasion, and proceeded, with staff and cudgel, to crack each other's skulls for the good of the king and the earl. One tall 30 friar alone was untouched by the panic of his

brethren, and stood steadfastly watching the combat with his arms akimbo, the colossal emblem of an unarmed neutrality.

At length, through the midst of the internal confusion, the earl, by the help of his good sword, the staunch valour of his men, and the blessing of the Virgin, fought his way to the chapel-gate—his bowmen closed him in—he vaulted into his saddle, clapped spurs to his horse, rallied his men on the  
10 first eminence, and changed his sword for a bow and arrow, with which he did old execution among the pursuers, who at last thought it most expedient to desist from offensive warfare, and to retreat into the abbey, where, in the king's name, they broached a pipe of the best wine, and attached all the venison in the larder, having first carefully unpacked the tuft of friars, and set the fallen abbot on his legs.

The friars, it may be well supposed, and such of the king's men as escaped unhurt from the affray,  
20 found their spirits a cup too low, and kept the flask moving from noon till night. The peaceful brethren, unused to the tumult of war, had undergone, from fear and discomposure, an exhaustion of animal spirits that required extraordinary refection. During the repast, they interrogated Sir Ralph Montfaucon, the leader of the soldiers, respecting the nature of the earl's offence.

'A complication of offences,' replied Sir Ralph, 'superinduced on the original basis of forest-treason.  
30 He began with hunting the king's deer, in despite of all remonstrance; followed it up by contempt of the

king's mandates, and by armed resistance to his power, in defiance of all authority; and combined with it the resolute withholding of payment of certain moneys to the Abbot of Doncaster, in denial of all law; and has thus made himself the declared enemy of church and state, and all for being too fond of venison.' And the knight helped himself to half a pasty.

'A heinous offender,' said a little round oily friar, appropriating the portion of pasty which Sir Ralph 10 had left.

'The earl is a worthy peer,' said the tall friar whom we have already mentioned in the chapel scene, 'and the best marksman in England.'

'Why, this is flat treason, Brother Michael,' said the little round friar, 'to call an attainted traitor a worthy peer.'

'I pledge you,' said Brother Michael. The little friar smiled and filled his cup. 'He will draw the long-bow,' pursued Brother Michael, 'with any bold 20 yeoman among them all.'

'Don't talk of the long-bow,' said the abbot, who had the sound of the arrow still whizzing in his ear: 'what have we pillars of the faith to do with the long-bow?'

'Be that as it may,' said Sir Ralph, 'he is an outlaw from this moment.'

'So much the worse for the law then,' said Brother Michael. 'The law will have a heavier miss of him than he will have of the law. He will 30 strike as much venison as ever, and more of other

game. I know what I say ; but *basta* : Let us drink.'

'What other game?' said the little friar. 'I hope he won't poach among our partridges.'

'Poach! not he,' said Brother Michael: 'if he wants your partridges, he will strike them under your nose (here's to you), and drag your trout-stream for you on a Thursday evening.'

'Monstrous! and starve us on fast-day,' said the  
10 little friar.

'But that is not the game I mean,' said Brother Michael.

'Surely, son Michael,' said the abbot, 'you do not mean to insinuate that the noble earl will turn freebooter?'

'A man must live,' said Brother Michael, 'earl or no. If the law takes his rents and beeves without his consent, he must take beeves and rents where he can get them without the consent of the law.  
20 This is the *lex talionis*.'

'Truly,' said Sir Ralph, 'I am sorry for the damsel: she seems fond of this wild runaway.'

'A mad girl, a mad girl,' said the little friar.

'How a mad girl?' said Brother Michael. 'Has she not beauty, grace, wit, sense, discretion, dexterity, learning, and valour?'

'Learning?' exclaimed the little friar; 'what has a woman to do with learning? And valour! who ever heard a woman commended for valour? Meek-  
30 ness, and mildness, and softness, and gentleness, and tenderness, and humility, and obedience to her

husband, and faith in her confessor, and domesticity, or, as learned doctors call it, the faculty of stay-at-homeitiveness, and embroidery, and music, and pickling, and preserving, and the whole complex and multiplex detail of the noble science of dinner, as well in preparation for the table, as in arrangement over it, and in distribution around it to knights, and squires, and ghostly friars,—these are female virtues: but valour—why who ever heard——?’

‘She is the all in all,’ said Brother Michael, 10  
 ‘gentle as a ring-dove, yet high-soaring as a falcon: humble below her deserving, yet deserving beyond the estimate of panegyric: an exact economist in all superfluity, yet a most bountiful dispenser in all liberality: the chief regulator of her household, the fairest pillar of her hall, and the sweetest blossom of her bower: having, in all opposite proposings, sense to understand, judgment to weigh, discretion to choose, firmness to undertake, diligence to conduct, perseverance to accomplish, and resolution to 20 maintain. For obedience to her husband, that is not to be tried till she has one: for faith in her confessor, she has as much as the law prescribes: for embroidery an Arachne: for music a Siren: and for pickling and preserving, did not one of her jars of sugared apricots give you your last surfeit at Arlingford Castle?’

‘Call you that preserving?’ said the little friar;  
 ‘I call it destroying. Call you it pickling? Truly it pickled me. My life was saved by miracle.’ 30

‘By canary,’ said Brother Michael. ‘Canary is

the only life preserver, the true *aurum potabile*, the universal panacea for all diseases, thirst, and short life. Your life was saved by canary.'

'Indeed, reverend father,' said Sir Ralph, 'if the young lady be half what you describe, she must be a paragon: but your commending her for valour does somewhat amaze me.'

'She can fence,' said the little friar, 'and draw the long-bow, and play at single-stick and quarter-staff.'

10 'Yet, mark you,' said Brother Michael, 'not like a virago or a hoyden, or one that would crack a serving-man's head for spilling gravy on her ruff, but with such womanly grace and temperate self-command as if those manly exercises belonged to her only, and were become for her sake feminine.'

'You incite me,' said Sir Ralph, 'to view her more nearly. That madcap earl found me other employment than to remark her in the chapel.'

20 'The earl is a worthy peer,' said Brother Michael; 'he is worth any fourteen earls on this side Trent, and any seven on the other.' (The reader will please to remember that Rubygill Abbey was *north* of Trent.)

'His mettle will be tried,' said Sir Ralph. 'There is many a courtier will swear to King Henry to bring him in dead or alive.'

'They must look to the brambles then,' said Brother Michael.

30 'The bramble, the bramble, the bonny forest bramble,  
Doth make a jest  
Of silken vest,

That will through greenwood scramble :  
The bramble, the bramble, the bonny forest bramble.'

'Plague on your lungs, son Michael,' said the abbot; 'this is your old coil: always roaring in your cups.'

'I know what I say,' said Brother Michael; 'there is often more sense in an old song than in a new homily.'

'The courtly pad doth amble,  
When his gay lord would ramble :  
But both may catch  
An awkward scratch,  
If they ride among the bramble :  
The bramble, the bramble, the bonny forest bramble.'

10

'Tall friar,' said Sir Ralph, 'either you shoot the shafts of your merriment at random, or you know more of the earl's designs than beseems your frock.'

'Let my frock,' said Brother Michael, 'answer for its own sins. It is worn past covering mine. It is too weak for a shield, too transparent for a screen, too thin for a shelter, too light for gravity, and too threadbare for a jest. The wearer would be naught indeed who should misbeseem such a wedding garment.'

But wherefore does the sheep wear wool ?

That he in season sheared may be,  
And the shepherd be warm though his flock be cool :  
*So I'll have a new cloak about me.'*



## CHAPTER II

THE Earl of Huntingdon, living in the vicinity of a royal forest, and passionately attached to the chase from his infancy, had long made as free with the king's deer as Lord Percy proposed to do with those of Lord Douglas in the memorable hunting of Cheviot. It is sufficiently well known how severe were the forest-laws in those days, and with what jealousy the kings of England maintained this branch of their prerogative; but menaces and re-  
10 monstrances were thrown away on the earl, who declared that he would not thank Saint Peter for admission into Paradise, if he were obliged to leave his bow and hounds at the gate. King Henry (the Second) swore by Saint Botolph to make him rue his sport, and, having caused him to be duly and formally accused, summoned him to London to answer the charge. The earl, deeming himself safer among his own vassals than among King Henry's courtiers, took no notice of the mandate. King  
20 Henry sent a force to bring him, *vi et armis*, to court. The earl made a resolute resistance, and put the king's force to flight under a shower of arrows, an act which the courtiers declared to be treason. At the same time, the Abbot of Doncaster sued up

the payment of certain moneys, which the earl, whose revenue ran a losing race with his hospitality, had borrowed at sundry times of the said abbot. But the earl, confident in the number and attachment of his retainers, stoutly refused either to repay the money, which he could not, or to yield the forfeiture, which he would not: a refusal which in those days was an act of outlawry. Thus the mutual resentments and interests of the king and the abbot concurred to subject the earl to the 10 penalties of outlawry, by which the abbot would gain his due upon the lands of Locksley, and the rest would be confiscate to the king. Still the king did not think it advisable to assail the earl in his own stronghold, but caused a diligent watch to be kept over his motions, till at length his rumoured marriage with the heiress of Arlingford seemed to point out an easy method of laying violent hands on the offender. Sir Ralph Montfaucon, a young man of good lineage, and of an aspiring temper, who 20 readily seized the first opportunity that offered of recommending himself to King Henry's favour by manifesting his zeal in his service, undertook the charge: and how he succeeded we have seen.

Sir Ralph's curiosity was strongly excited by the friar's description of the young lady of Arlingford; and he prepared in the morning to visit the castle, under the very plausible pretext of giving the baron an explanation of his intervention at the nuptials. Brother Michael and the little fat friar proposed 30 to be his guides. The proposal was courteously

accepted, and they set out together, leaving Sir Ralph's followers at the abbey. The knight was mounted on a spirited charger; Brother Michael on a large heavy-trotting horse; and the little fat friar on a plump soft-paced Galloway, so correspondent with himself in size, rotundity, and sleekness, that if they had been amalgamated into a centaur, there would have been nothing to alter in their proportions. . . .

'But yonder are the towers of Arlingford,' said  
10 Brother Michael.

The little friar stopped. He seemed suddenly struck with an awful thought, which caused a momentary pallescence in his rosy complexion; and after a brief hesitation he turned his Galloway, and told his companions he should give them good-day.

'Why, what is in the wind now, Brother Peter?' said Friar Michael.

'The Lady Matilda,' said the little friar, 'can draw the long-bow. She must bear no goodwill to  
20 Sir Ralph; and if she should espy him from her tower, she may testify her recognition with a cloth-yard shaft. She is not so infallible a markswoman, but that she might shoot at a crow and kill a pigeon. She might peradventure miss the knight, and hit me, who never did her any harm.'

'Tut, tut, man,' said Brother Michael, 'there is no such fear.'

'Mass,' said the little friar, 'but there is such a fear, and very strong too. You who have it not  
30 may keep your way, and I who have it shall take mine. I am not just now in the vein for being

picked off at a long shot.' And saying these words, he spurred up his four-footed better half, and galloped off as nimbly as if he had had an arrow singing behind him.

'Is this Lady Matilda, then, so very terrible a damsel?' said Sir Ralph to Brother Michael.

'By no means,' said the friar. 'She has certainly a high spirit; but it is the wing of the eagle, without his beak or his claw. She is as gentle as magnanimous; but it is the gentleness of the 10 summer wind, which, however lightly it wave the tuft of the pine, carries with it the intimation of a power, that, if roused to its extremity, could make it bend to the dust.'

'From the warmth of your panegyric, ghostly father,' said the knight, 'I should almost suspect you were in love with the damsel.'

'So I am,' said the friar, 'and I care not who knows it; but all in the way of honesty, master soldier. I am, as it were, her spiritual lover; and 20 were she a damsel errant, I would be her ghostly esquire, her friar militant. I would buckle me in armour of proof, and the devil might thresh me black with an iron flail, before I would knock under in her cause. Though they be not yet one canonically, thanks to your soldiership, the earl is her liege lord, and she is his liege lady. I am her father confessor and ghostly director: I have taken on me to show her the way to the next world; and how can I do that if I lose sight of her in this? 30 seeing that this is but the road to the other, and has

so many circumvolutions and ramifications of bye-ways and beaten paths (all more thickly set than the true one with finger-posts and milestones, not one of which tells truth), that a traveller has need of some one who knows the way, or the odds go hard against him that he will ever see the face of Saint Peter.'

'But there must surely be some reason,' said Sir Ralph, 'for Father Peter's apprehension.'

- 10 'None,' said Brother Michael, 'but the apprehension itself; fear being its own father, and most prolific in self-propagation. The lady did, it is true, once signalise her displeasure against our little brother, for reprimanding her in that she would go hunting a-mornings instead of attending matins. She cut short the thread of his eloquence by sportively drawing her bow-string and loosing an arrow over his head; he waddled off with singular speed, and was in much awe of her for many
- 20 months. I thought he had forgotten it; but let that pass. In truth, she would have had little of her lover's company, if she had liked the chaunt of the choristers better than the cry of the hounds; yet I know not; for they were companions from the cradle, and reciprocally fashioned each other to the love of the fern and the foxglove. Had either been less sylvan, the other might have been more saintly; but they will now never hear matins but those of the lark, nor reverence vaulted aisle but that of the
- 30 greenwood canopy. They are twin plants of the forest, and are identified with its growth.

For the slender beech and the sapling oak  
That grow by the shadowy rill,  
You may cut down both at a single stroke,  
You may cut down which you will.

But this you must know, that as long as they grow  
Whatever change may be,  
You never can teach either oak or beech  
To be aught but a greenwood tree.'

### CHAPTER III

THE knight and the friar arriving at Arlingford Castle, and leaving their horses in the care of Lady Matilda's groom, with whom the friar was in great favour, were ushered into a stately apartment where they found the baron alone, flourishing an enormous carving knife over a brother baron—of beef—with as much vehemence of action as if he were cutting down an enemy. The baron was a gentleman of a fierce and choleric temperament: he was lineally  
10 descended from the redoubtable Fierābras of Normandy, who came over to England with the Conqueror, and who, in the battle of Hastings, killed with his own hand four-and-twenty Saxon cavaliers all on a row. The very excess of the baron's internal rage on the preceding day had smothered its external manifestation: he was so equally angry with both parties, that he knew not on which to vent his wrath. He was enraged with the earl for having brought himself into such a dilemma without  
20 his privity; and he was no less enraged with the king's men for their very unseasonable intrusion. He could willingly have fallen upon both parties, but he must necessarily have begun with one; and he felt that on whichever side he should strike the

first blow, his retainers would immediately join battle. He had therefore contented himself with forcing away his daughter from the scene of action. In the course of the evening he had received intelligence that the earl's castle was in possession of a party of the king's men, who had been detached by Sir Ralph Montfaucon to seize on it during the earl's absence. The baron inferred from this that the earl's case was desperate; and those who have had the opportunity of seeing a rich friend fall 10 suddenly into poverty, may easily judge by their own feelings how quickly and completely the whole moral being of the earl was changed in the baron's estimation. The baron immediately proceeded to require in his daughter's mind the same summary revolution that had taken place in his own, and considered himself exceedingly ill-used by her non-compliance. The lady had retired to her chamber, and the baron had passed a supperless and sleepless night, stalking about his apartments till an advanced 20 hour of the morning, when hunger compelled him to summon into his presence the spoils of the buttery, which, being the intended array of an uneaten wedding feast, were more than usually abundant, and on which, when the knight and the friar entered, he was falling with desperate valour. He looked up at them fiercely, with his mouth full of beef and his eyes full of flame, and rising, as ceremony required, made an awful bow to the knight, inclining himself forward over the table and 30 presenting his carving-knife *en militaire*, in a manner



that seemed to leave it doubtful whether he meant to show respect to his visitor, or to defend his provision: but the doubt was soon cleared up by his politely motioning the knight to be seated; on which the friar advanced to the table, saying, 'For what we are going to receive,' and commenced operations without further prelude by filling and drinking a goblet of wine. The baron at the same time offered one to Sir Ralph, with the look of a  
10 man in whom habitual hospitality and courtesy were struggling with the ebullitions of natural anger. They pledged each other in silence, and the baron, having completed a copious draught, continued working his lips and his throat, as if trying to swallow his wrath as he had done his wine. Sir Ralph, not knowing well what to make of these ambiguous signs, looked for instructions to the friar, who by significant looks and gestures seemed to advise him to follow his example and partake of  
20 the good cheer before him, without speaking till the baron should be more intelligible in his demeanour. The knight and the friar, accordingly, proceeded to refect themselves after their ride; the baron looking first at the one and then at the other, scrutinising alternately the serious looks of the knight and the merry face of the friar, till at length, having calmed himself sufficiently to speak, he said, 'Courteous knight and ghostly father, I presume you have some other business with me than to eat my beef and  
30 drink my canary; and if so, I patiently await your leisure to enter on the topic.'

•  
‘Lord Fitzwater,’ said Sir Ralph, ‘in obedience to my royal master, King Henry, I have been the unwilling instrument of frustrating the intended nuptials of your fair daughter; yet will you, I trust, owe me no displeasure for my agency therein, seeing that the noble maiden might otherwise by this time have been the bride of an outlaw.’

‘I am very much obliged to you, sir,’ said the baron; ‘very exceedingly obliged. Your solicitude for my daughter is truly paternal, and for a young 10 man and a stranger very singular and exemplary; and it is very kind withal to come to the relief of my insufficiency and inexperience, and concern yourself so much in that which concerns you not.’

‘You misconceive the knight, noble baron,’ said the friar. ‘He urges not his reason in the shape of a preconceived intent, but in that of a subsequent extenuation. True, he has done the Lady Matilda great wrong——’

•  
‘How, great wrong?’ said the baron. ‘What do 20 you mean by great wrong? Would you have had her married to a wild fly-by-night, that accident made an earl and nature a deer-stealer? that has not wit enough to eat venison without picking a quarrel with monarchy? that flings away his own lands into the clutches of rascally friars, for the sake of hunting in other men’s grounds, and feasting vagabonds that wear Lincoln green, and would have flung away mine into the bargain if he had had my daughter? What do you mean by great wrong?’ 30

‘True,’ said the friar; ‘great right, I meant.’

‘Right!’ exclaimed the baron; ‘what right has any man to do my daughter right but myself? What right has any man to drive my daughter’s bridegroom out of the chapel in the middle of the marriage ceremony, and turn all our merry faces into green wounds and bloody coxcombs, and then come and tell me he has done us great right?’

‘True,’ said the friar; ‘he has done neither right nor wrong.’

10 ‘But he has,’ said the baron, ‘he has done both, and I will maintain it with my glove.’

‘It shall not need,’ said Sir Ralph; ‘I will concede anything in honour.’

‘And I,’ said the baron, ‘will concede nothing in honour; I will concede nothing in honour to any man.’

‘Neither will I, Lord Fitzwater,’ said Sir Ralph, ‘in that sense; but hear me. I was commissioned by the king to apprehend the Earl of Huntingdon.  
20 I brought with me a party of soldiers, picked and tried men, knowing that he would not lightly yield. I sent my lieutenant with a detachment to surprise the earl’s castle in his absence, and laid my measures for intercepting him on the way to his intended nuptials; but he seems to have had intimation of this part of my plan, for he brought with him a large armed retinue, and took a circuitous route, which made him, I believe, somewhat later than his appointed hour. When the lapse of time showed me that he  
30 had taken another track, I pursued him to the chapel; and I would have waited the close of the

ceremony, if I had thought that either yourself or your daughter would have felt desirous that she should have been the bride of an outlaw.'

'Who said, sir,' cried the baron, 'that we were desirous of any such thing? But truly, sir, if I had a mind to the devil for a son-in-law, I would fain see the man that should venture to interfere.'

'That would I,' said the friar; 'for I have undertaken to make her renounce the devil.' 10

'She shall not renounce the devil,' said the baron, 'unless I please. You are very ready with your undertakings. Will you undertake to make her renounce the earl, who, I believe, is the devil incarnate? Will you undertake that?'

'Will I undertake,' said the friar, 'to make Trent run westward, or to make flame burn downward, or to make a tree grow with its head in the earth and its root in the air?'

'So then,' said the baron, 'a girl's mind is as 20 hard to change as nature and the elements, and it is easier to make her renounce the devil than a lover. Are you a match for the devil, and no match for a man?'

'My warfare,' said the friar, 'is not of this world. I am militant, not against man, but the devil, who goes about seeking what he may devour.'

'Oh! does he so?' said the baron; 'then I take it that makes you look for him so often in my 30 buttery. Will you cast out the devil whose name

is Legion, when you cannot cast out the imp whose name is Love ?'

'Marriages,' said the friar, 'are made in heaven. Love is God's work, and therewith I meddle not.'

'God's work, indeed !' said the baron, 'when the ceremony was cut short in the church. Could men have put them asunder, if God had joined them together ? And the earl is now no earl, but plain Robert Fitz-Ooth : therefore, I'll none of him.'

10 'He may atone,' said the friar, 'and the king may mollify. The earl is a worthy peer, and the king is a courteous king.'

'He cannot atone,' said Sir Ralph. 'He has killed the king's men ; and if the baron should aid and abet, he will lose his castle and land.'

'Will I ?' said the baron ; 'not while I have a drop of blood in my veins. He that comes to take them shall first serve me as the friar serves my flasks of canary : he shall drain me dry as hay. Am  
20 I not disparaged ? Am I not outraged ? Is not my daughter vilified, and made a mockery ? A girl half-married ? There was my butler brought home with a broken head. My butler, a friar : there is that may move your sympathy. Friar, the earl-no-earl shall come no more to my daughter.'

'Very good,' said the friar.

'It is not very good,' said the baron, 'for I cannot get her to say so.'

'I fear,' said Sir Ralph, 'the young lady must be much distressed and discomposed.'

'Not a whit, sir,' said the baron. 'She is, as

usual, in a most provoking imperturbability, and contradicts me so smilingly that it would enrage you to see her.'

'I had hoped,' said Sir Ralph, 'that I might have seen her, to make my excuse in person for the hard necessity of my duty.'

He had scarcely spoken, when the door opened, and the lady made her appearance.

## CHAPTER IV

MATILDA, not dreaming of visitors, tripped into the apartment in a dress of forest green, with a small quiver by her side and a bow and arrow in her hand. Her hair, black and glossy as the raven's wing, curled like wandering clusters of dark ripe grapes under the edge of her round bonnet; and a plume of black feathers fell back negligently above it, with an almost horizontal inclination, that seemed the habitual effect of rapid motion against the wind.

10 Her black eyes sparkled like sunbeams on a river: a clear, deep, liquid radiance, the reflection of ethereal fire,—tempered, not subdued, in the medium of its living and gentle mirror. Her lips were half opened to speak as she entered the apartment: and with a smile of recognition to the friar and a curtsey to the stranger knight she approached the baron and said, 'You are late at your breakfast, father.'

'I am not at breakfast,' said the baron; 'I have been at supper—my last night's supper, for I had  
20 none.'

'I am sorry,' said Matilda, 'you should have gone to bed supperless.'

'I did not go to bed supperless,' said the baron; 'I did not go to bed at all; and what are you

doing with that green dress and that bow and arrow ? ’

‘ I am going a-hunting, ’ said Matilda.

‘ A-hunting, ’ said the baron. ‘ What, I warrant you, to meet the earl, and slip your neck into the same noose. ’

‘ No, ’ said Matilda, ‘ I am not going out of our own woods to-day. ’

‘ How do I know that ? ’ said the baron. ‘ What surety have I of that ? ’ 10

‘ Here is the friar, ’ said Matilda. ‘ He will be surety. ’

‘ Not he, ’ said the baron ; ‘ he will undertake nothing but where the devil is a party concerned. ’

‘ Yes, I will, ’ said the friar : ‘ I will undertake anything for the Lady Matilda. ’

‘ No matter for that, ’ said the baron : ‘ she shall not go hunting to-day. ’

‘ Why, father, ’ said Matilda, ‘ if you coop me up here in this odious castle, I shall pine and die like a 20 lonely swan on a pool. ’

‘ No, ’ said the baron, ‘ the lonely swan does not die on a pool. If there be a river at hand, she flies to the river, and finds her a mate ; and so shall not you. ’

‘ But, ’ said Matilda, ‘ you may send, with me any, or as many, of your grooms as you will. ’

‘ My grooms, ’ said the baron, ‘ are all false knaves. There is not a rascal among them but loves you better than me. • Villains that I feed and 30 clothe. ’



‘Surely,’ said Matilda, ‘it is not villainy to love me: if it be, I should be sorry my father were an honest man.’ The baron relaxed his muscles into a smile. ‘Or my lover either,’ added Matilda. The baron looked grim again.

‘For your lover,’ said the baron, ‘you may give God thanks of him. He is as arrant a knave as ever poached.’

‘What, for hunting the king’s deer?’ said  
10 Matilda. ‘Have I not heard you rail at the forest laws by the hour?’

‘Did you ever hear me,’ said the baron, ‘rail myself out of house and land? If I had done that, then were I a knave.’

‘My lover,’ said Matilda, ‘is a brave man, and a true man, and a generous man, and a young man, and a handsome man; ay, and an honest man, too.’

‘How can he be an honest man,’ said the baron,  
‘when he has neither house nor land, which are the  
20 better part of a man?’

‘They are but the husk of a man,’ said Matilda, ‘the worthless coat of the chestnut: the man himself is the kernel.’

‘The man is the grape stone,’ said the baron, ‘and the pulp of the melon. The house and land are the true substantial fruit, and all that give him savour and value.’

‘He will never want house or lands,’ said  
Matilda, ‘while the meeting boughs weave a green  
30 roof in the wood, and the free range of the hart marks out the bounds of the forest.’

‘Vert and venison ! vert and venison !’ exclaimed the baron. ‘Treason and flat rebellion. Confound your smiling face ! what makes you look so good-humoured ? What ! you think I can’t look at you and be in a passion ? You think so, do you ? We shall see. Have you no fear in talking thus, when here is the king’s liegeman come to take us all into custody, and confiscate our goods and chattels ?’

‘Nay, Lord Fitzwater,’ said Sir Ralph, ‘you wrong me in your report. My visit is one of 10 courtesy and excuse, not of menace and authority.’

‘There it is,’ said the baron : ‘every one takes a pleasure in contradicting me. Here is this courteous knight, who has not opened his mouth three times since he has been in my house except to take in provision, cuts me short in my story with a flat denial.’

• ‘Oh ! I cry you mercy, sir knight,’ said Matilda ;  
‘I did not mark you before. I am your debtor for  
no slight favour, and so is my liege lord.’ 20

‘Her liege lord !’ exclaimed the baron, taking large strides across the chamber.

‘Pardon me, gentle lady,’ said Sir Ralph. ‘Had I known you before yesterday, I would have cut off my right hand ere it should have been raised to do you displeasure.’

•  
‘Oh, sir,’ said Matilda, ‘a good man may be forced on an ill office : but I can distinguish the man from his duty.’ She presented to him her hand, which he kissed respectfully, and simultane- 30  
ously with the contact thirty-two invisible arrows

plunged at once into his heart, one from every point of the compass of his pericardia.

‘Well, father,’ added Matilda, ‘I must go to the woods.’

‘Must you?’ said the baron; ‘I say you must not.’

‘But I am going,’ said Matilda.

‘But I will have up the drawbridge,’ said the baron.

10 ‘But I will swim the moat,’ said Matilda.

‘But I will secure the gates,’ said the baron.

‘But I will leap from the battlement,’ said Matilda.

‘But I will lock you in an upper chamber,’ said the baron.

‘But I will shred the tapestry,’ said Matilda, ‘and let myself down.’

‘But I will lock you in a turret,’ said the baron, ‘where you shall only see light through a loophole.’

20 ‘But through that loophole,’ said Matilda, ‘will I take my flight, like a young eagle from its aerie; and, father, while I go out freely, I will return willingly; but if once I slip out through a loophole——’ She paused a moment, and then added, singing,—

The love that follows fair  
Will never its faith betray;  
But the faith that is held in a chain  
Will never be found again,  
If a single link give way.

30

The melody acted irresistibly on the harmonious

propensities of the friar, who accordingly sang in his turn,—

For hark ! hark ! hark !  
The dog doth bark,  
That watches the wild deer's lair,  
The hunter awakes at the peep of the dawn,  
But the lair it is empty, the deer it is gone,  
And the hunter knows not where.

• Matilda and the friar then sung together,—

Then follow, oh follow ! the hounds do cry ;                   10  
The red sun flames in the eastern sky ;  
The stag bounds over the hollow.  
He that lingers in spirit, or loiters in hall,  
Shall see us no more till the evening fall,  
And no voice but the echo shall answer his call ;  
Then follow, oh follow, follow ;  
Follow, oh follow, follow !

During the process of this harmony, the baron's eyes wandered from his daughter to the friar, and from the friar to his daughter again, with an alternate expression of anger differently modified ; when he looked on the friar, it was anger without qualification ; when he looked on his daughter it was still anger, but tempered by an expression of involuntary admiration and pleasure. These rapid fluctuations of the baron's physiognomy—the habitual, reckless, resolute merriment in the jovial face of the friar,—and the cheerful, elastic spirits that played on the lips and sparkled in the eyes of Matilda,—would have presented a very amusing combination to Sir 30 Ralph, if one of the three images in the group had

not absorbed his total attention with feelings of intense delight very nearly allied to pain. The baron's wrath was somewhat counteracted by the reflection that his daughter's good spirits seemed to show that they would naturally rise triumphant over all disappointments; and he had had sufficient experience of her humour to know that she might sometimes be led, but never could be driven. Then, too, he was always delighted to hear her sing,  
10 though he was not at all pleased in this instance with the subject of her song. Still he would have endured the subject for the sake of the melody of the treble, but his mind was not sufficiently attuned to unison to relish the harmony of the bass. The friar's accompaniment put him out of all patience, and—'So,' he exclaimed, 'this is the way you teach my daughter to renounce the devil, is it? A hunting friar, truly! Who ever heard before of a hunting friar? A profane, roaring, bawling, bumper-  
20 bibbing, neck-breaking, catch-singing friar?'

'Under favour, bold baron,' said the friar; but the friar was warm with canary, and in his singing vein; and he could not go on in plain unmusical prose. He therefore sang in a new tune,—

Though I be now a grey, grey friar,  
Yet I was once a hale young knight;  
The cry of my dogs was the only choir  
In which my spirit did take delight.

30 Little I recked of matin bell,  
But drowned its toll with my clanging horn;  
And the only beads I loved to tell  
Were the beads of dew on the spangled thorn.

The baron was going to storm, but the friar paused, and Matilda sang in repetition,—

Little I reckon of matin bell,  
But drown its toll with my clanging horn ;  
And the only beads I love to tell  
Are the beads of dew on the spangled thorn.

And then she and the friar sang the four lines together, and rang the changes upon them alternately.

Little I reckon of matin bell,

10

sang the friar.

‘A precious friar,’ said the baron.

But drown its toll with my clanging horn,  
sang Matilda.

‘More shame for you,’ said the baron.

And the only beads I love to tell  
Are the beads of dew on the spangled thorn,

sang Matilda and the friar together.

‘Penitent and confessor,’ said the baron: ‘a hopeful pair truly.’

20

The friar went on,—

An archer keen I was withal,  
As ever did lean on greenwood tree ;  
And could make the fleetest roebuck fall,  
A good three hundred yards from me.  
Though changeful time, with hand severe,  
Has made me now these joys forgo,  
Yet my heart bounds whene’er, I hear  
Yoicks! hark away ! and tally ho !

Matilda chimed in as before.

30

‘Are you mad?’ said the baron. ‘Are you insane? Are you possessed? What do you mean? What in the devil’s name do you both mean?’

Yoicks! hark away! and tally ho!

roared the friar.

The baron’s pent-up wrath had accumulated like the waters above the dam of an overshot mill. The pond-head of his passion being now filled to the utmost limit of its capacity, and beginning to over-  
10 flow in the quivering of his lips and the flashing of his eyes, he pulled up all the flash-boards at once, and gave loose to the full torrent of his indignation, by seizing, like furious Ajax, not a massy stone more than two modern men could raise, but a vast dish of beef more than fifty ancient yeomen could eat, and whirled it like a coit, *in terrorem*, over the head of the friar, to the extremity of the apartment

Where it on oaken floor did settle,  
With mighty din of ponderous metal.

20 ‘Nay, father,’ said Matilda, taking the baron’s hand, ‘do not harm the friar: he means not to offend you. My gaiety never before displeased you. Least of all should it do so now, when I have need of all my spirits to outweigh the severity of my fortune.’

As she spoke the last words, tears started into her eyes, which, as if ashamed of the involuntary betraying of her feelings, she turned away to conceal. The baron was subdued at once. He kissed  
30 his daughter, held out his hand to the friar, and

said, 'Sing on, in God's name, and crack away the flasks till your voice swims in canary.' Then turning to Sir Ralph, he said, 'You see how it is, sir knight. Matilda is my daughter: but she has me in leading-strings, that is the truth of it.'



## CHAPTER V

THE friar had often had experience of the baron's testy humour; but it had always before confined itself to words, in which the habit of testiness often mingled more expression of displeasure than the internal feeling prompted. He knew the baron to be hot and choleric, but at the same time hospitable and generous; passionately fond of his daughter, often thwarting her in seeming, but always yielding to her in fact. The early attachment between  
10 Matilda and the Earl of Huntingdon had given the baron no serious reason to interfere with her habits and pursuits, which were so congenial to those of her lover; and not being overburdened with orthodoxy, he was not sorry to encourage his daughter's choice of her confessor in brother Michael, who had more jollity and less hypocrisy than any of his fraternity, and was very little anxious to disguise his love of the good things of this world 'under the semblance of a sanctified  
20 exterior. The friar and Matilda had often sung duets together; and had been accustomed to the baron's chiming in with a stormy *capriccio*, which was usually charmed into silence by some sudden turn in the witching melodies of Matilda. They

had therefore naturally calculated, as far as their wild spirits calculated at all, on the same effects from the same causes. But the circumstances of the preceding day had made an essential alteration in the case. The baron knew well, from the intelligence he had received, that the earl's offence was past remission, which would have been of less moment but for the awful fact of his castle being in the possession of the king's forces, and in those days possession was considerably more than eleven points 10 of the law. The baron was therefore convinced that the earl's outlawry was infallible, and that Matilda must either renounce her lover, or become with him an outlaw and a fugitive. In proportion, therefore, to the baron's knowledge of the strength and duration of her attachment was his fear of the difficulty of its ever being overcome. Her love of the forest and the chase, which he had never before discouraged, now presented itself to him as matter of serious alarm; and if her cheerfulness gave him 20 hope, on the one hand, by indicating a spirit superior to all disappointments, it was suspicious to him, on the other, as arising from some latent certainty of being soon united to the earl. All these circumstances concurred to render their songs of the vanished deer and greenwood archery, and Yoicks and Hark-away extremely *mal à propos*, and to make his anger boil and bubble in the cauldron of his spirit, till its more than ordinary excitement burst forth with sudden impulse into active mani- 30 festation.

However, his discobolic exploit proved the climax of his rage, and was succeeded by an immediate sense that he had passed the bounds of legitimate passion; and he sunk immediately from the very pinnacle of opposition to the level of implicit acquiescence. The friar's spirits were not to be marred by such a little incident. He was half inclined at first to return the baron's compliment, but his love of Matilda checked him; and when the  
10 baron held out his hand, the friar seized it cordially, and they drowned all recollection of the affair by pledging each other in a cup of canary.

The friar having stayed long enough to see everything replaced on a friendly footing, rose and moved to take his leave. Matilda told him he must come again on the morrow, for she had a very long confession to make to him. This the friar promised to do, and departed with the knight.

Sir Ralph on reaching the abbey drew his fol-  
20 lowers together, and led them to Locksley Castle, which he found in the possession of his lieutenant, whom he again left there with a sufficient force to hold it in safe keeping in the king's name, and proceeded to London to report the results of his enterprise.

Now, Henry, our royal king, was very wroth at the earl's evasion, and swore by St. Thomas à Becket (whom he had himself translated into a saint by having him knocked on the head), that he would  
30 give the castle and lands of Locksley to the man who should bring in the earl. Hereupon ensued a

process of thought in the mind of the knight. The eyes of the fair huntress of Arlingford had left a wound in his heart which only she who gave could heal. He had seen that the baron was no longer very partial to the outlawed earl, but that he still retained his old affection for the lands and castle of Locksley. Now, the lands and castles were very fair things in themselves, and would be pretty appurtenances to an adventurous knight; but they would be doubly valuable as certain passports to the 10 father's favour, which was one step towards that of the daughter, or at least towards obtaining possession of her either quietly or perforce; for the knight was not so nice in his love as to consider the lady's free grace a *sine qua non*; and to think of being, by any means whatever, the lord of Locksley and Arlingford, and the husband of the bewitching Matilda, was to cut in the shades of futurity a vista very tempting to a soldier of fortune. He set out in high spirits with a chosen band of followers, and 20 beat up all the country far and wide around both the Ouse and the Trent; but fortune did not seem disposed to second his diligence, for no vestige whatever could he trace of the earl. His followers, who were only paid with the wages of hope, began to murmur and fall off; so that, one fine morning, the knight found himself sitting on a pleasant bank of the Trent, with only a solitary squire, who still clung to the shadow of preferment, because he did not see at the moment any better chance of 30 substance.

the knight's ale, and the foresters' venison, and there will be Kit Scrapesqueak with his fiddle, and little Tom Whistlerap with his fife and tabor, and Sam Trumtwang with his harp, and Peter Muggledrone with his bagpipe, and how I shall dance with Will Whitethorn!' added the girl, clapping her hands as she spoke, and bounding from the ground with the pleasure of the anticipation.

10 A tall athletic young man approached, to whom the rustic maidens courtesied with great respect; and one of them informed Sir Ralph that it was young Master William Gamwell. The young gentleman invited and conducted the knight to the hall, where he introduced him to the old knight his father, and to the old lady his mother, and to the young lady his sister, and to a number of bold yeomen, who were laying siege to beef, brawn, and plum pie, around a ponderous table, and taking  
20 copious draughts of old October. A motto was inscribed over the interior door,—

EAT, DRINK, AND BE MERRY:

an injunction which Sir Ralph and his squire showed remarkable alacrity in obeying. Old Sir Guy of Gamwell gave Sir Ralph a very cordial welcome, and entertained him during supper with several of his best stories, enforced with an occasional slap on the back, and pointed with a peg in the ribs; a species of vivacious eloquence in which  
30 the old gentleman excelled, and which is supposed

by many of that pleasant variety of the human species, known by the name of choice fellows and comical dogs, to be the genuine tangible shape of the cream of a good joke.

## CHAPTER VI

OLD Sir Guy of Gamwell, and young William Gamwell, and fair Alice Gamwell, and Sir Ralph Montfaucon and his squire, rode together the next morning to the scene of the feast. They arrived on a village green, surrounded with cottages peeping from among the trees by which the green was completely encircled. The whole circle was hung round with one continuous garland of flowers, depending in irregular festoons from the branches.

10 In the centre of the green was a May-pole hidden in boughs and garlands; and a multitude of round-faced bumpkins and cherry-cheeked lassies were dancing around it, to the quadruple melody of Scrapesqueak, Whistlerap, Trumtwang, and Muggledrone; harmony we must not call it; for, though they had agreed to a partnership in point of tune, each, like a true painstaking man, seemed determined to have his time to himself; Muggledrone played *allegretto*, Trumtwang *allegro*, Whistlerap

20 *presto*, and Scrapesqueak *prestissimo*. There was a kind of mathematical proportion in their discrepancy; while Muggledrone played the tune four times, Trumtwang played it five, Whistlerap six, and Scrapesqueak eight; for the latter completely

distanced all his competitors, and indeed worked his elbow so nimbly that its outline was scarcely distinguishable through the mistiness of its rapid vibration.

While the knight was delighting his eyes and ears with these pleasant sights and sounds, all eyes were turned in one direction; and Sir Ralph, looking round, saw a fair lady in green and gold come riding through the trees accompanied by a portly friar in grey, and several fair damsels and 10 gallant grooms. On their near approach, he recognised the Lady Matilda and her ghostly adviser, Brother Michael. A party of foresters arrived from another direction, and then ensued cordial interchanges of greeting, and collisions of hands and lips, among the Gamwells and the newcomers,—‘How does my fair coz, Mawd?’ and ‘How does my sweet coz, Mawd?’ and ‘How does my wild coz, Mawd?’ And ‘Eh! jolly friar, your hand, old boy’; and ‘Here, honest friar’; and ‘To me, 20 merry friar,’ and ‘By your favour, mistress Alice’; and ‘Hey! cousin Robin’; and ‘Hey! cousin Will’; and ‘Od’s life! merry Sir Guy, you grow younger every year,’—as the old knight shook them all in turn with one hand, and slapped them on the back with the other, in token of his affection. A number of young men and women advanced, some drawing, and others dancing round, a floral car; and having placed a crown of flowers on Matilda’s head, they saluted her Queen of the May, and drew her 30 to the place appointed for the rural sports.



A hogshead of ale was abroach under an oak, and a fire was blazing in an open space before the trees to roast the fat deer which the foresters brought. The sports commenced; and, after an agreeable series of bowling, coiting, pitching, hurling, racing, leaping, grinning, wrestling or friendly dislocation of joints, and cudgel-playing or amicable cracking of skulls, the trial of archery ensued. The conqueror was to be rewarded with a golden arrow  
10 from the hand of the Queen of the May, who was to be his partner in the dance till the close of the feast. This stimulated the knight's emulation: young Gamwell supplied him with a bow and arrow, and he took his station among the foresters, but had the mortification to be outshot by them all, and to see one of them lodge the point of his arrow in the golden ring of the centre, and receive the prize from the hand of the beautiful Matilda, who smiled on him with particular grace. The jealous  
20 knight scrutinised the successful champion with great attention, and surely thought he had seen that face before. In the meantime the forester led the lady to the station. The luckless Sir Ralph drank deep draughts of love from the matchless grace of her attitudes, as, taking the bow in her left hand, and adjusting the arrow with her right, advancing her left foot, and gently curving her beautiful figure with a slight motion of her head that waved her black feathers and her ringleted hair, she drew the  
30 arrow to its head, and loosed it from her open fingers. The arrow struck within the ring of gold,

so close to that of the victorious forester that the points were in contact, and the feathers were intermingled. Great acclamations succeeded, and the forester led Matilda to the dance. Sir Ralph gazed on her fascinating motions till the torments of baffled love and jealous rage became unendurable; and approaching young Gamwell, he asked him if he knew the name of that forester who was leading the dance with the Queen of the May.

‘Robin, I believe,’ said young Gamwell, care- 10  
lessly; ‘I think they call him Robin.’

‘Is that all you know of him?’ said Sir Ralph.

‘What more should I know of him?’ said young Gamwell.

‘Then I can tell you,’ said Sir Ralph; ‘he is the outlawed Earl of Huntingdon, on whose head is set so large a price.’

‘Ay, is he?’ said young Gamwell, in the same careless manner.

‘He were a prize worth the taking,’ said Sir 20  
Ralph.

‘No doubt,’ said young Gamwell.

‘How think you?’ said Sir Ralph; ‘are the foresters his adherents?’

‘I cannot say,’ said young Gamwell.

‘Is your peasantry loyal and well disposed?’ said Sir Ralph.

‘Passing loyal,’ said young Gamwell.

‘If I should call on them in the king’s name,’ said Sir Ralph, ‘think you they would aid and 30  
assist?’

'Most likely they would,' said young Gamwell; 'one side or the other.'

'Ay, but which side?' said the knight.

'That remains to be tried,' said young Gamwell.

'I have King Henry's commission,' said the knight, 'to apprehend this earl that was. How would you advise me to act, being, as you see, without attendant force?'

10 'I would advise you,' said young Gamwell, 'to take yourself off without delay, unless you would relish the taste of a volley of arrows, a shower of stones, and a hailstorm of cudgel-blows, which would not be turned aside by a God save King Henry.'

Sir Ralph's squire no sooner heard this, and saw by the looks of the speaker that he was not likely to prove a false prophet, than he clapped spurs to his horse and galloped off with might and main. This gave the knight a good excuse to pursue him, 20 which he did with great celerity, calling, 'Stop, you rascal.' When the squire fancied himself safe out of the reach of pursuit, he checked his speed, and allowed the knight to come up with him. They rode on several miles in silence, till they discovered the towers and spires of Nottingham, where the knight introduced himself to the sheriff, and demanded an armed force to assist in the apprehension of the outlawed Earl of Huntingdon. The sheriff, who was wiking 'to have his share of the prize, 30 determined to accompany the knight in person, and regaled him and his man with good store of the

best ; after which, they, with a stout retinue of fifty men, took the way to Gamwell feast.

‘God’s my life,’ said the sheriff, as they rode along, ‘I had as lief you would tell me of a service of plate. I much doubt if this outlawed earl, this forester Robin, be not the man they call Robin Hood, who has quartered himself in Sherwood Forest, and whom in endeavouring to apprehend I have fallen divers times into disasters. He has gotten together a band of disinherited prodigals, 10 outlawed debtors, excommunicated heretics, elder sons that have spent all they had, and younger sons that never had anything to spend ; and with these he kills the king’s deer, and plunders wealthy travellers of five-sixths of their money ; but if they be abbots or bishops, them he despoils utterly.’

The sheriff then proceeded to relate to his companion the adventure of the abbot of Doubleflask : how the abbot, returning to his abbey in company with his high selerer, who carried in his portmanteau 20 the rents of the abbey lands, and with a numerous train of attendants, came upon four seeming peasants, who were roasting the king’s venison by the king’s highway : how, in just indignation at this flagrant infringement of the forest laws, he asked them what they meant, and they answered that they meant to dine : how he ordered them to be seized and bound, and led captive to Nottingham, that they might know wild-flesh to have been destined by Providence for licensed and privileged appetites, and not for the 30 base hunger of unqualified knaves : how they prayed

for mercy, and how the abbot swore by Saint Charity that he would show them none: how one of them thereupon drew a bugle-horn from under his smock-frock and blew three blasts, on which the abbot and his train were instantly surrounded by sixty bowmen in green: how they tied him to a tree, and made him say mass for their sins: how they unbound him, and sate him down with them to dinner, and gave him venison and wild-fowl and  
10 wine, and made him pay for his fare all the money in his high selerer's portmanteau, and enforced him to sleep all night under a tree in his cloak, and to leave the cloak behind him in the morning: how the abbot, light in pocket and heavy in heart, raised the country upon Robin Hood, for so he had heard the chief forester called by his men, and hunted him into an old woman's cottage: how Robin changed dresses with the old woman, and how the abbot rode in great triumph into Nottingham,  
20 having in custody an old woman in a green doublet and breeches: how the old woman discovered herself: how the merry men of Nottingham laughed at the abbot: how the abbot railed at the old woman, and how the old woman out-railed the abbot, telling him that Robin had given her food and fire through the winter, which no abbot would ever do, but would rather take it from her for what he called the good of the church, by which he meant his own laziness and gluttony: and that she  
30 knew a true man from a false thief, and a free forester from a greedy abbot.

‘Thus, you see,’ added the sheriff, ‘how this villain perverts the deluded people by making them believe that those who tithe and toll upon them for their spiritual and temporal benefit are not their best friends and fatherly guardians; for he holds that in giving to boors and old women what he takes from priests and peers, he does but restore to the former what the latter had taken from them; and this the impudent varlet calls distributive justice. Judge now if any loyal subject can be safe 10 in such neighbourhood.’

While the sheriff was thus enlightening his companion concerning the offenders, and whetting his own indignation against them, the sun was fast sinking to the west. They rode on till they came in view of a bridge, which they saw a party approaching from the opposite side, and the knight presently discovered that the party consisted of the Lady Matilda and Friar Michael, young Gamwell, cousin Robin, and about half-a-dozen foresters. 20 The knight pointed out the earl to the sheriff, who exclaimed, ‘Here, then, we have him an easy prey’; and they rode on manfully towards the bridge, on which the other party made halt.

‘Who be these,’ said the friar, ‘that come riding so fast this way? Now, as God shall judge me, it is that false knight Sir Ralph Montfaucon, and the Sheriff of Nottingham, with a posse of men. We must make good our post, and let them dislodge us if they may.’ 30

The two parties were now near enough to parley;

and the sheriff and the knight, advancing in the front of the cavalcade, called on the lady, the friar, young Gamwell, and the foresters, to deliver up that false traitor, Robert, formerly Earl of Huntingdon. Robert himself made answer by letting fly an arrow that struck the ground between the fore-feet of the sheriff's horse. The horse reared up from the whizzing, and lodged the sheriff in the dust; and, at the same time, the fair Matilda favoured the knight  
10 with an arrow in his right arm, that compelled him to withdraw from the affray. His men lifted the sheriff carefully up, and replaced him on his horse, whom he immediately with great rage and zeal urged on to the assault with his fifty men at his heels, some of whom were intercepted in their advance by the arrows of the foresters and Matilda; while the friar, with an eight-foot staff, dislodged the sheriff a second time, and laid on him with all the vigour of the church militant on earth, in spite  
20 of his ejaculations of 'Hey, Friar Michael! What means this, honest friar? Hold, ghostly friar! Hold, holy friar!'—till Matilda interposed, and delivered the battered sheriff to the care of the foresters. The friar continued flourishing his staff among the sheriff's men, knocking down one, breaking the ribs of another, dislocating the shoulder of a third, flattening the nose of a fourth, cracking the skull of a fifth, and pitching a sixth into the river, till the few, who were lucky enough to escape with  
30 whole bones, clapped spurs to their horses and fled for their lives, under a farewell volley of arrows.



FRIAR TUCK.

[See page 52.]





Sir Ralph's squire, meanwhile, was glad of the excuse of attending his master's wound to absent himself from the battle; and put the poor knight to a great deal of unnecessary pain by making as long a business as possible of extracting the arrow, which he had not accomplished when Matilda, approaching, extracted it with great facility, and bound up the wound with her scarf, saying, 'I reclaim my arrow, sir knight, which struck where I aimed at, to admonish you to desist from your 10 enterprise. I could as easily have lodged it in your heart.'

'It did not need,' said the knight, with rueful gallantry; 'you have lodged one there already.'

'If you mean to say that you love me,' said Matilda, 'it is more than I ever shall you: but if you will show your love by no further interfering with mine, you will at least merit my gratitude.'

The knight made a wry face under the double 20 pain of heart and body caused at the same moment by the material or martial, and the metaphorical or erotic arrow, of which the latter was thus barbed by a declaration more candid than flattering; but he did not choose to put in any such claim to the lady's gratitude as would bar all hopes of her love: he therefore remained silent; and the lady and her escort, leaving him and the sheriff to the care of the squire, rode on till they came in sight of Arlingford Castle, where they parted\* in several directions. 30 The friar rode off alone; and after the foresters had

lost sight of him, they heard his voice through the twilight, singing—

A staff, a staff, of a young oak graff,

That is both stoure and stiff,

Is all a good friar can needs desire

To shrive a proud sherîffe.

And thou, fine fellôwe, who has tasted so

Of the forester's greenwood game,

Wilt be in no haste thy time to waste

10 In seeking more taste of the same :

Or this can I read thee, and riddle thee well,

Thou hadst better by far be the devil in hell,

Than the sheriff of Nottinghame.

## CHAPTER VII

MATILDA had carried her point with the baron of ranging at liberty whithersoever she would, under her positive promise to return home ; she was a sort of prisoner on parole : she had obtained the indulgence by means of an obsolete habit of always telling the truth and keeping her word, which our enlightened age has discarded with other barbarisms, but which had the effect of giving her father so much confidence in her, that he could not help considering her word a better security than locks 10 and bars.

The baron had been one of the last to hear of the rumours of the new outlaws of Sherwood, as Matilda had taken all possible precautions to keep those rumours from his knowledge, fearing that they might cause the interruption of her greenwood liberty ; and it was only during her absence at Gamwell feast, that the butler, being thrown off his guard by liquor, forgot her injunctions, and regaled the baron with a long story of the right merry 20 adventure of Robin Hood and the Abbot of Double-flask.

The baron was one morning, as usual, cutting his way valorously through a rampart of cold provision,

when his ears were suddenly assailed by a tremendous alarm, and sallying forth, and looking from his castle wall, he perceived a large party of armed men on the other side of the moat, who were calling on the warder in the king's name to lower the drawbridge and raise the portcullis, which had both been secured by Matilda's order. The baron walked along the battlement till he came opposite to these unexpected visitors, who, as soon as they  
10 saw him, called out, 'Lower the drawbridge, in the king's name.'

'For what, in the devil's name?' said the baron.

'The Sheriff of Nottingham,' said one, 'lies in bed grievously bruised, and many of his men are wounded, and several of them slain; and Sir Ralph Montfaucon, knight, is sore wounded in the arm; and we are charged to apprehend William Gamwell the younger, of Gamwell Hall, and Father Michael  
20 of Rubygill Abbey, and Matilda Fitzwater of Arlingford Castle, as agents and accomplices in the said breach of the king's peace.'

'Breach of the king's fiddlestick!' answered the baron. 'What do you mean by coming here with your cock and bull stories of my daughter grievously bruising the Sheriff of Nottingham? You are a set of vagabond rascals in disguise; and I hear, by the bye, there is a gang of thieves that has just set up business in Sherwood Forest; a pretty pretence,  
30 indeed, to get into my castle with force and arms, and make a famine in my buttery, and a drought in

my cellar, and a void in my strong box, and a vacuum in my silver scullery.'

'Lord Fitzwater,' cried one, 'take heed how you resist lawful authority; we will prove ourselves——'

'You will prove yourselves arrant knaves, I doubt not,' answered the baron; 'but, villains, you shall be more grievously bruised by me than ever was the sheriff by my daughter (a pretty tale truly!), if you do not forthwith avoid my territory.' 10

By this time the baron's men had flocked to the battlements, with long-bows and cross-bows, slings and stones, and Matilda with her bow and quiver at their head. The assailants, finding the castle so well defended, deemed it expedient to withdraw till they could return in greater force, and rode off to Rubygill Abbey, where they made known their errand to the father abbot, who, having satisfied himself of their legitimacy, and conned over the allegations, said that doubtless Brother Michael had 20 heinously offended; but it was not for the civil law to take cognisance of the misdoings of a holy friar; that he would summon a chapter of monks, and pass on the offender a sentence proportionate to his offence. The ministers of civil justice said that would not do. The abbot said it would do and should; and bade them not to provoke the meekness of his catholic charity to lay them under the curse of Rome. This threat had its effect, and the party rode off to Gamwell Hall, where they found the 30 Gamwells and their men just sitting down to dinner,

which they saved them the trouble of eating by consuming it in the king's name themselves, having first seized and bound young Gamwell; all which they accomplished by dint of superior numbers, in despite of a most vigorous stand made by the Gamwellites in defence of their young master and their provisions.

The baron, meanwhile, after the ministers of justice had departed, interrogated Matilda concerning the alleged fact of the grievous bruising of the Sheriff of Nottingham. Matilda told him the whole history of Gamwell feast, and of their battle on the bridge, which had its origin in a design of the Sheriff of Nottingham to take one of the foresters into custody.

'Ay! ay!' said the baron, 'and I guess who that forester was; but truly this friar is a desperate fellow. I did not think there could have been much valour under a grey frock. And so you wounded the knight in the arm? You are a wild girl, Mawd,—a chip of the old block, Mawd. A wild girl, and a wild friar, and three or four foresters, wild lads all, to keep a bridge against a tame knight, and a tame sheriff, and fifty tame varlets; by this light, the like was never heard! But do you know, Mawd, you must not go about so any more, sweet Mawd: you must stay at home, you must ensconce; for there is your tame sheriff on the one hand, that will take you perforce; and there is your wild forester on the other hand, that will take you without any force at all, Mawd: your wild

forester, Robin, cousin Robin, Robin Hood of Sherwood Forest, that beats and binds bishops, spreads nets for archbishops, and hunts a fat abbot as if he were a buck: excellent game, no doubt, but you must hunt no more in such company. I see it now: truly I might have guessed before that the bold outlaw Robin, the most courteous Robin, the new thief of Sherwood Forest, was your lover, the earl that has been: I might have guessed it before, and what led you so much to the woods; 10 but you hunt no more in such company. No more May games and Gamwell feasts. My lands and castle would be the forfeit of a few more such pranks; and I think they are as well in my hands as the king's, quite as well.'

'You know, father,' said Matilda, 'the condition of keeping me at home: I get out if I can, and not on parole.'

'Ay! ay!' said the baron, 'if you can; very true: watch and ward, Mawd, watch and ward is 20 my word: if you can, is yours. The mark is set, and so start fair.'

The baron would have gone on in this way for an hour; but the friar made his appearance with a long oak staff in his hand, singing,—

Drink and sing, and eat and laugh,  
And so go forth to battle:  
For the top of a skull and the end of a staff  
Do make a ghostly rattle.

'Ho! ho! friar!' said the baron,—'singing friar, 30 laughing friar, roaring friar, fighting friar, hacking



friar, thwacking friar; cracking, cracking, cracking friar; joke-cracking, bottle-cracking, skull-cracking friar!’

‘And ho! ho!’ said the friar,—‘bold baron, old baron, sturdy baron, wordy baron, long baron, strong baron, mighty baron, flighty baron, mazed baron, crazed baron, hacked baron, thwacked baron; cracked, cracked, cracked baron; bone-cracked, sconce-cracked, brain-cracked baron!’

10 ‘What do you mean,’ said the baron, ‘bully friar, by calling me hacked and thwacked?’

‘Were you not in the wars?’ said the friar, ‘where he who escapes unhacked does more credit to his heels than his arms. I pay tribute to your valour in calling you hacked and thwacked.’

‘I never was thwacked in my life,’ said the baron; ‘I stood my ground manfully, and covered my body with my sword. If I had had the luck to meet with a fighting friar indeed, I might have  
20 been thwacked, and soundly too; but I hold myself a match for any two laymen; it takes nine fighting laymen to make a fighting friar.’

‘Whence come you now, holy father?’ asked Matilda.

‘From Rubygill Abbey,’ said the friar, ‘whither I never return:

30 For I must seek some hermit cell,  
Where I alone my beads may tell,  
And on the wight who that way fares  
Levy a toll for my ghostly pray’rs,  
Levy a toll, levy a toll,  
Levy a toll for my ghostly pray’rs.’

‘What is the matter, then, father?’ said Matilda.

‘This is the matter,’ said the friar. ‘My holy brethren have held a chapter on me, and sentenced me to seven years’ privation of wine. I therefore deemed it fitting to take my departure, which they would fain have prohibited. I was enforced to clear the way with my staff. I have grievously beaten my dearly beloved brethren. I grieve thereat: but they forced me thereto. I have beaten them much. I mowed them down to the 10 right and to the left, and left them like an ill-reaped field of wheat, ear and straw pointing all ways, scattered in singleness and jumbled in masses: and so bade them farewell, saying, Peace be with you. But I must not tarry, lest danger be in my rear; therefore, farewell, sweet Matilda, and farewell, noble baron; and farewell, sweet Matilda again, the alpha and omega of Father Michael, the first and the last.’

‘Farewell, father,’ said the baron, a little softened: 20 ‘and God send you be never assailed by more than fifty men at a time.’

‘Amen,’ said the friar, ‘to that good wish.’

‘And we shall meet again, father, I trust,’ said Matilda.

‘When the storm is blown over,’ said the baron.

‘Doubt it not,’ said the friar, ‘though flooded Trent were between us, and fifty devils guarded the bridge.’

He kissed Matilda’s forehead, and walked away 30 without a song.

## CHAPTER VIII

A PAGE had been brought up in Gamwell Hall, who, while he was little, had been called Little John, and continued to be so called after he had grown to be a foot taller than any other man in the house. He was full seven feet high. His latitude was worthy of his longitude, and his strength was worthy of both; and though an honest man by profession, he had practised archery on the king's deer for the benefit of his master's household, and  
10 for the improvement of his own eye and hand, till his aim had become infallible within the range of two miles. He had fought manfully in defence of his young master, took his captivity exceedingly to heart, and fell into bitter grief and boundless rage when he heard that he had been tried in Nottingham and sentenced to death. Alice Gamwell, at Little John's request, wrote three letters of -one tenour; and Little John, having attached them to three blunt arrows, saddled the fleetest steed in old  
20 Sir Guy of Gamwell's stables, mounted, and rode first to Arlingford Castle, where he shot one of the three arrows over the battlements; then to Rubygill Abbey, where he shot the second into the abbey garden; then back past Gamwell Hall to the





‘But know you, father, a sharp arrow in the same place would have killed you.’

[See page 63.]

borders of Sherwood Forest, where he shot the third into the wood. Now the first of these arrows lighted in the nape of the neck of Lord Fitzwater, and lodged itself firmly between his skin and his collar; the second rebounded with the hollow vibration of a drumstick from the shaven scone of the Abbot of Rubygill; and the third pitched perpendicularly into the centre of a venison pasty in which Robin Hood was making incision.

Matilda ran up to her father in the court of 10 Arlingford Castle, seized the arrow, drew off the letter, and concealed it in her bosom before the baron had time to look round, which he did with many expressions of rage against the impudent villain who had shot a blunt arrow into the nape of his neck.

‘But, you know, father,’ said Matilda, ‘a sharp arrow in the same place would have killed you; therefore the sending a blunt one, was very considerate.’

20

‘Considerate with a vengeance,’ said the baron. ‘Where was the consideration of sending it at all? This is some of your forester’s pranks. He has missed ~~you~~ in the forest, since I have kept watch and ward over you, and by way of a love-token and a remembrance to you takes a random shot at me.’

The Abbot of Rubygill picked up the missile-missive or messenger arrow, which had rebounded from the shaven crown, with a very unghostly malediction on the sender, which he suddenly 30 checked with a pious and consolatory reflection on

the goodness of Providence in having blessed him with such a thickness of skull, to which he was now indebted for temporal preservation, as he had before been for spiritual promotion. He opened the letter, which was addressed to Father Michael; and found it to contain an intimation that William Gamwell was to be hanged on Monday at Nottingham.

‘And I wish,’ said the abbot, ‘Father Michael  
10 were to be hanged with him: an ungrateful monster, after I had rescued him from the fangs of civil justice, to reward my lenity by not leaving a bone unbruised among the holy brotherhood of Rubygill.’

Robin Hood extracted from his venison pasty a similar intimation of the evil destiny of his cousin, whom he determined, if possible, to rescue from the jaws of Cerberus.

The Sheriff of Nottingham, though still sore with  
20 his bruises, was so intent on revenge, that he raised himself from his bed to attend the execution of William Gamwell. He rode to the gallows, in all the pride and pomp of shrievalty, and with a splendid retinue of well-equipped knaves and varlets, as our ancestors called honest serving-men.

Young Gamwell was brought forth with his arms pinioned behind him; his sister Alice and his father, Sir Guy, attending him in disconsolate mood. He had rejected the ‘confessor provided by the sheriff,  
30 and had insisted on the privilege of choosing his own, whom Little John had promised to bring.

Little John, however, had not made his appearance when the fatal procession began its march; but when they reached the place of execution, Little John appeared, accompanied by a ghostly friar.

‘Sheriff,’ said young Gamwell, ‘let me not die with my hands pinioned: give me a sword, and set any odds of your men against me, and let me die the death of a man, like the descendant of a noble house, which has never yet been stained with ignominy.’ 10

‘No, no,’ said the sheriff; ‘I have had enough of setting odds against you. I have sworn you shall be hanged, and hanged you shall be.’

‘Then God have mercy on me,’ said young Gamwell; ‘and now, holy friar, shrive my sinful soul.’

The friar approached.

‘Let me see this friar,’ said the sheriff: ‘if he be the friar of the bridge, I had as lief have the devil in Nottingham; but he shall find me too much for him here.’ 20

‘The friar of the bridge,’ said Little John, ‘as you very well know, sheriff, was Father Michael of Rubygill Abbey, and you may easily see that this is not the man.’

‘I see it,’ said the sheriff; ‘and God be thanked for his absence.’

Young Gamwell stood at the foot of the ladder. The friar approached him, opened his book, groaned, turned up the white of his eyes, tossed up his arms in the air, and said ‘*Dominus vobiscum.*’ He then 30 crossed both his hands on his breast under the folds



of his holy robes, and stood a few moments as if in inward prayer. A deep silence among the attendant crowd accompanied this action of the friar; interrupted only by the hollow tone of the death-bell, at long and dreary intervals. Suddenly the friar threw off his holy robes, and appeared a forester clothed in green, with a sword in his right hand and a horn in his left. With the sword he cut the bonds of William Gamwell, who instantly snatched a sword  
10 from one of the sheriff's men; and with the horn he blew a loud blast, which was answered at once by four bugles from the quarters of the four winds, and from each quarter came five-and-twenty bowmen running all on a row.

'Treason! treason!' cried the sheriff. Old Sir Guy sprang to his son's side, and so did Little John; and the four setting back to back, kept the sheriff and his men at bay till the bowmen came within shot and let fly their arrows among the sheriff's  
20 men, who, after a brief resistance, fled in all directions. The forester who had personated the friar, sent an arrow after the flying sheriff, calling with a strong voice, 'To the sheriff's left arm, as a keepsake from Robin Hood.' The arrow reached its destiny; the sheriff redoubled his speed, and, with one arrow in his arm, did not stop to breathe till he was out of reach of another.

The foresters did not waste time in Nottingham, but were soon at a distance from its walls. Sir  
30 Guy returned with Alice to Gamwell Hall; but thinking he should not be safe there, from the share

he had had in his son's rescue, they only remained long enough to supply themselves with clothes and money, and departed, under the escort of Little John, to another seat of the Gamwells in Yorkshire. Young Gamwell, taking it for granted that his offence was past remission, determined on joining Robin Hood, and accompanied him to the forest, where it was deemed expedient that he should change his name; and he was rechristened without a priest, and with wine instead of water, by the 10 immortal name of Scarlet.

## CHAPTER IX

THE baron was inflexible in his resolution not to let Matilda leave the castle. The letter, which announced to her the approaching fate of young Gamwell, filled her with grief, and increased the irksomeness of a privation which already preyed sufficiently on her spirits, and began to undermine her health. She had no longer the consolation of the society of her old friend Father Michael; the little fat friar of Rubygill was substituted as the  
10 castle confessor, not without some misgivings in his ghostly bosom; but he was more allured by the sweet savour of the good things of this world at Arlingford Castle, than deterred by his awe of the Lady Matilda, which nevertheless was so excessive, from his recollection of the twang of the bow-string, that he never ventured to find her in the wrong, much less to enjoin anything in the shape of reproof.

The little friar, however, though he found the lady spotless; found the butler a great sinner; at  
20 least so it was conjectured, from the length of time he always took to confess him in the buttery.

Matilda became every day more pale and dejected; her spirit, which could have contended against any strenuous affliction, pined in the mono-

tonous inaction to which she was condemned. While she could freely range the forest with her lover in the morning, she had been content to return to her father's castle in the evening, thus preserving underanged the balance of her duties, habits, and affections; not without a hope that the repeal of her lover's outlawry might be eventually obtained, by a judicious distribution of some of his forest spoils among the holy fathers and saints-that-were-to-be. But the affair at Gamwell feast threw 10 many additional difficulties in the way of the accomplishment of this hope: and very shortly afterwards King Henry the Second went to make up in the next world his quarrel with Thomas à Becket; and Richard Cœur de Lion made all England resound with preparations for the crusade, to the great delight of many zealous adventurers, who eagerly flocked under his banner, in the hope of enriching themselves with Saracen spoil, which they called fighting the battles of God. Richard, 20 who was not remarkably scrupulous in his financial operations, was not likely to overlook the lands and castle of Locksley, which he appropriated immediately to his own purposes, and sold to the highest bidder. Now, as the repeal of the outlawry would involve the restitution of the estates to the rightful owner, it was obvious that it could never be expected from that most legitimate and most Christian king, Richard, the First of England. Matilda, therefore, felt little hope that her lover would be 30 anything but an outlaw for life.

The departure of King Richard from England was succeeded by the episcopal regency of the Bishops of Ely and Durham. Longchamp, Bishop of Ely, proceeded to show his sense of Christian fellowship by arresting his brother bishop, and despoiling him of his share in the government; and to set forth his humility and loving-kindness in a retinue of nobles and knights who consumed in one night's entertainment some five years' revenue of  
10 their entertainer, and in a guard of fifteen hundred foreign soldiers, whom he considered indispensable to the exercise of a vigour beyond the law in maintaining wholesome discipline over the refractory English. The ignorant impatience of the multitude with these fruits of good living displayed itself in a general ferment, of which Prince John took advantage to make the experiment of getting possession of his brother's crown in his absence. He began by calling at Reading a council of barons, whose aspect  
20 induced the holy bishop to disguise himself and make his escape beyond sea. Prince John followed up his advantage by obtaining possession of several strong posts, and, among others, of the castle of Nottingham.

While John was conducting his operations at Nottingham, he rode at times past the castle of Arlingford. He stopped on one occasion to claim Lord Fitzwater's hospitality, and made most princely havoc among his venison and brawn. Now, it is a  
30 matter of record among divers great historians and learned clerks that he was then and there grievously

smitten by the charms of the lovely Matilda, and that a few days after he despatched his travelling minstrel, or laureate, Harpiton, to the castle of Arlingford, to make proposals to the lady.

Prince John was pleased to fall into an exceeding passion, when his confidential messenger returned from his embassy in piteous plight, having been, by the baron's order, first tossed in a blanket and set in the stocks to cool, and afterwards ducked in the moat and set again in the stocks to dry. John 10 swore to revenge horribly this flagrant outrage on royal prerogative, and to obtain possession of the lady by force of arms; and accordingly collected a body of troops, and marched upon Arlingford Castle. A letter, conveyed as before on the point of a blunt arrow, announced his approach to Matilda: and Lord Fitzwater had just time to assemble his retainers, collect a hasty supply of provision, raise the draw-bridge, and drop the porteullis, when the castle was surrounded by the enemy. The little fat friar, who 20 during the confusion was asleep in the buttery, found himself, on awaking, inclosed in the besieged castle, and dolefully bewailed his evil chance.

## CHAPTER X

PRINCE JOHN sat down impatiently before Arlingford Castle in the hope of starving out the besieged; but finding the duration of their supplies extend itself in an equal ratio with the prolongation of his hope, he made vigorous preparations for carrying the place by storm. He constructed an immense machine on wheels, which, being advanced to the edge of the moat, would lower a temporary bridge, of which one end would rest on the bank and the  
10 other on the battlements, and which, being well furnished with stepping-boards, would enable his men to ascend the inclined plane with speed and facility. Matilda received intimation of this design by the usual friendly channel of a blunt arrow, which must either have been sent from some secret friend in the prince's camp, or from some vigorous archer beyond it.

The machine was completed, and the ensuing morning fixed for the assault. Six men, relieved at  
20 intervals, kept watch over it during the night. Prince John retired to sleep, congratulating himself in the expectation that another day would place the fair culprit at his princely mercy. His anticipations mingled with the visions of his slumber, and

he dreamed of wounds and drums, and sacking and firing the castle, and bearing off in his arms the beautiful prize through the midst of fire and smoke. In the height of this imaginary turmoil, he awoke, and conceived for a few moments that certain sounds which rang in his ears were the continuation of those of his dream, in that sort of half-consciousness between sleeping and waking, when reality and phantasy meet and mingle in dim and confused resemblance. He was, however, very soon fully 10 awake to the fact of his guards calling on him to arm, which he did in haste, and beheld the machine in flames, and a furious conflict raging around it. He hurried to the spot, and found that his camp had been suddenly assailed from one side by a party of foresters, and that the baron's people had made a sortie on the other, and that they had killed the guards, and set fire to the machine, before the rest of the camp could come to the assistance of their fellows. 20

The night was in itself intensely dark, and the firelight shed around it a vivid and unnatural radiance. On one side, the crimson light quivered by its own agitation on the waveless moat, and on the bastions and buttresses of the castle, and their shadows lay in massy blackness on the illuminated walls: on the other, it shone upon the woods, streaming far within among the open trunks, or resting on the closer foliage. The circumference of darkness bounded the scene on all sides; and in the 30 centre raged the war; shields, helmets, and bucklers



gleaming and glittering as they rang and clashed against each other; plumes confusedly tossing in the crimson light, and the massy light and shade that fell on the faces of the combatants, giving additional energy to their ferocious expression.

John, drawing nearer to the scene of action, observed two young warriors fighting side by side, one of whom wore the habit of a forester, the other that of a retainer of Arlingford. He looked intently  
10 on them both; their position towards the fire favoured the scrutiny; and the hawk's eye of love very speedily discovered that the latter was the fair Matilda. The forester he did not know; but he had sufficient tact to discern that his success would be very much facilitated by separating her from this companion, above all others. He therefore formed a party of men into a wedge, only taking especial care not to be the point of it himself, and drove it between them with so much precision, that  
20 they were in a moment far asunder.

'Lady Matilda,' said John, 'yield yourself my prisoner.'

'If you would wear me, prince,' said Matilda, 'you must win me': and without giving him time to deliberate on the courtesy of fighting with the lady of his love, she raised her sword in the air, and lowered it on his head with an impetus that would have gone nigh to fathom even that extraordinary depth of brain which always by divine grace fur-  
30 nishes the interior of a head-royal, if he had not very dexterously parried the blow. Prince John

wished to disarm and take captive, not in any way to wound or injure, least of all to kill, his fair opponent. Matilda was only intent to get rid of her antagonist at any rate: the edge of her weapon painted his complexion with streaks of very unlover-like crimson, and she would probably have marred John's hand for ever signing Magna Charta, but that he was backed by the advantage of numbers, and that her sword broke short on the boss of his buckler. John was following up his advantage to 10 make a captive of the lady, when he was suddenly felled to the earth by an unseen antagonist. Some of his men picked him carefully up, and conveyed him to his tent, stunned and stupefied.

When he recovered, he was told that his people had been on the point of securing the lady prisoner, when the devil suddenly appeared among them in the likeness of a tall friar, having his grey frock cinctured with a sword-belt, and his crown, which whether it were shaven or no they could not see, 20 surmounted with a helmet, and flourishing an eight-foot staff, with which he laid about him to the right and to the left, knocking down the prince and his men as if they had been so many nine-pins: in fine, he had rescued the prisoner, and made a clear passage through friend and foe, and in conjunction with a chosen party of archers, had covered the retreat of the baron's men and the foresters, who had all gone off in a body towards Sherwood Forest.

30

John considered that the castle would in itself be

a great acquisition to him as a stronghold in furtherance of his design on his brother's throne; and was determining to take possession with the first light of morning, when he had the mortification to see the castle burst into flames in several places at once. A piteous cry was heard from within, and while the prince was proclaiming a reward to any one who would enter into the burning pile, and elucidate the mystery of the doleful voice, forth  
10 waddled the little fat friar in an agony of fear, out of the fire into the frying-pan; for he was instantly taken into custody and carried before Prince John, wringing his hands and tearing his hair.

'Are you the friar,' said Prince John, in a terrible voice, 'that laid me prostrate in battle, mowed down my men like grass, rescued my captive, and covered the retreat of my enemies? And, not content with this, have you now set fire to the castle in which I intended to take up my royal quarters?'

20 The little friar quaked like a jelly: he fell on his knees, and attempted to speak; but in his eagerness to vindicate himself from this accumulation of alarming charges, he knew not where to begin; his ideas rolled round upon each other like the radii of a wheel; the words he desired to utter, instead of issuing, as it were, in a right line from his lips, seemed to conglobate themselves into a sphere turning on its own axis in his throat: after several ineffectual efforts, his utterance totally failed  
30 him, and he remained gasping, with his mouth open, his lips quivering, his hands clasped together, and

the whites of his eyes turned up towards the prince with an expression most ruefully imploring.

‘Are you that friar?’ repeated the prince.

Several of the bystanders declared that he was not that friar. The little friar, encouraged by this patronage, found his voice, and pleaded for mercy. The prince questioned him closely concerning the burning of the castle. The little friar declared, that he had been in too great fear during the siege to know much of what was going forward, except that 10 he had been conscious during the last few days of a lamentable deficiency of provisions, and had been present that very morning at the broaching of the last butt of sack. Harpiton groaned in sympathy. The little friar added, that he knew nothing of what had passed since, till he heard the flames roaring at his elbow.

‘Take him away, Harpiton,’ said the prince; ‘fill him with sack and turn him out.’

‘Never mind the sack,’ said the little friar, ‘turn 20 me out at once.’

‘A sad chance,’ said Harpiton, ‘to be turned out without sack.’

But ~~that~~ Harpiton thought a sad chance the little friar thought a merry one, and went bounding like a fat buck towards the abbey of Rabygill.

An arrow, with a letter attached to it, was shot into the camp, and carried to the prince. The contents were these:—

‘PRINCE JOHN—I do not consider myself to have 30 resisted lawful authority in defending my castle

against you, seeing that you are at present in a state of active rebellion against your liege sovereign Richard: and if my provisions had not failed me, I would have maintained it till doomsday. As it is, I have so well disposed my combustibles that it shall not serve you as a stronghold in your rebellion. If you hunt in the chases of Nottinghamshire, you may catch other game than my daughter. Both she and I are content to be houseless for a time, in the  
10 reflection that we have deserved your enmity, and the friendship of Cœur de Lion.      FITZWATER.'

## CHAPTER XI

THE baron, with some of his retainers, and all the foresters, halted at daybreak in Sherwood Forest. The foresters quickly erected tents, and prepared an abundant breakfast of venison and ale.

‘Now, Lord Fitzwater,’ said the chief forester, ‘recognise your son-in-law that was to have been, in the outlaw Robin Hood.’

‘Ay, ay,’ said the baron, ‘I have recognised you long ago.’

‘And recognise your young friend Gamwell,’ said the second, ‘in the outlaw Scarlet.’

‘And Little John, the page,’ said the third, ‘in Little John the outlaw.’

‘And Father Michael, of Rubygill Abbey,’ said the friar, ‘in Friar Tuck, of Sherwood Forest. Truly, I have a chapel here hard by, in the shape of a hollow tree, where I put up my prayers for travellers; and Little John holds the plate at the door, for good praying deserves good paying.’

‘I am in fine company,’ said the baron. 20

‘In the very best of company,’ said the friar; ‘in the high court of Nature, and in the midst of her own nobility. Is it not so? This goodly grove is our palace: the oak and the beech are its colonnade

and its canopy: the sun and the moon and the stars are its everlasting lamps: the grass, and the daisy, and the primrose, and the violet, are its many-coloured floor of green, white, yellow, and blue; the mayflower, and the woodbine, and the eglantine, and the ivy, are its decorations, its curtains, and its tapestry: the lark, and the thrush, and the linnet, and the nightingale, are its unhired minstrels and musicians. Robin Hood is king of the forest both  
10 by dignity of birth and by virtue of his standing army: to say nothing of the free choice of his people, which he has indeed, but I pass it by as an illegitimate basis of power. He holds his dominion over the forest, and its horned multitude of citizen-deer, and its swinish multitude or peasantry of wild boars, by right of conquest and force of arms. He levies contributions among them by the free consent of his archers, their virtual representatives. If they should find a voice to complain that we are  
20 "tyrants and usurpers to kill and cook them up in their assigned and native dwelling-place," we should most convincingly admonish them, with point of arrow, that they have nothing to do with our laws but to obey them. Is it not written ~~that the fat~~ ribs of the herd shall be fed upon by the mighty in the land? And have not they withal my blessing? my orthodox, canonical, and archiepiscopal blessing? Do I not give thanks for them when they are well roasted and smoking under my nose?  
30 What title had William of Normandy to England, that Robin of Locksley has not to merry Sherwood?

William fought for his claim. So does Robin. With whom, both? With any that would or will dispute it. William raised contributions. So does Robin. From whom, both? From all that they could or can make pay them. Why did any pay them to William? Why do any pay them to Robin? For the same reason to both: because they could not or cannot help it. They differ indeed, in this, that William took from the poor and gave to the rich, and Robin takes from the rich and 10 gives to the poor: and therein is Robin illegitimate: though in all else he is true prince. Scarlet and John, are they not peers of the forest? lords temporal of Sherwood? And am not I lord spiritual? Am I not archbishop? Am I not pope? Do I not consecrate their banner and absolve their sins? Are not they state, and am not I church? Are not they state monarchical, and am not I church militant? Do I not excommunicate our enemies from venison and brawn, and by 'r Lady, when need 20 calls, beat them down under my feet? The State levies tax; and the Church levies tithe. Even so do we. Mass, we take all at once. What then? It is tax by redemption and tithe by commutation. Your William and Richard can cut and come again, but our Robin deals with slippery subjects that come not twice to his exchequer. What need we then to constitute a court, except a fool and a laureate? For the fool, his only use is to make false knaves merry by art, and we are true men and 30 are merry by nature. For the laureate, his only



office is to find virtues in those who have none, and to drink sack for his pains. We have quite virtue enough to need him not, and can drink our sack for ourselves.'

'Well preached, friar,' said Robin Hood; 'yet there is one thing wanting to constitute a court, and that is a queen. And now, lovely Matilda, look round upon these sylvan shades where we have so often roused the stag from his ferny covert. The  
10 rising sun smiles upon us through the stems of that beechen knoll. Shall I take your hand, Matilda, in the presence of this my court? Shall I crown you with our wildwood coronal, and hail you queen of the forest? Will you be the Queen Matilda of your own true King Robin?'

Matilda smiled assent.

'Not Matilda,' said the friar: 'the rules of our holy alliance require new birth. We have excepted in favour of Little John, because he is great John,  
20 and his name is a misnomer. I baptize thee MARIAN.'

'Here is a pretty conspiracy,' exclaimed the baron. 'Why, you villainous friar, think you to nickname and marry my daughter before my face with impunity?'

'Even so, bold baron,' said the friar; 'we are strongest here. Say you, might overcomes right? I say no. There is no right but might: and to say that might overcomes right is to say that right over-  
30 comes itself—an absurdity most palpable. Your right was the stronger in Arlingford, and ours is the

stronger in Sherwood. Your right was right as long as you could maintain it; so is ours. So is King Richard's, with all deference be it spoken; and so is King Saladin's; and their two mights are now committed in bloody fray, and that which overcomes will be right, just as long as it lasts, and as far as it reaches. And, now, if any of you know any just impediment——'

'Fire and fury,' said the baron.

'Fire and fury,' said the friar, 'are modes of 10 that might which constitutes right, and are just impediments to anything against which they can be brought to bear. They are our good allies upon occasion, and would declare for us now if you should put them to the test.'

'Father,' said Matilda, 'you know the terms of our compact. From the moment you restrained my liberty, you renounced your claim to all but compulsory obedience. The friar argues well. Right ends with might. Thick walls, dreary galleries, and 20 tapestried chambers, were indifferent to me while I could leave them at pleasure, but have ever been hateful to me since they held me by force. May I never again have roof but the blue sky, nor canopy but the green leaves, nor barrier but the forest bounds; with the foresters to my train, Little John to my page, Friar Tuck to my ghostly adviser, and Robin Hood to my liege lord. I am no longer Lady Matilda Fitzwater, of Arlingford Castle, but plain Maid Marian, of Sherwood Forest.'

30

'Long live Maid Marian!' re-echoed the foresters.

‘Oh, false girl,’ said the baron, ‘do you renounce your name and parentage?’

‘Not my parentage,’ said Marian, ‘but my name indeed. Do not all maids renounce it at the altar?’

‘The altar?’ said the baron. ‘Grant me patience! what do you mean by the altar?’

‘Pile green turf,’ said the friar; ‘wreath it with flowers, and crown it with fruit, and we will show the noble baron what we mean by the altar.’

10 The foresters did as the friar directed.

‘Now, Little John,’ said the friar, ‘on with the cloak of the Abbot of Doubleflask. I appoint thee my clerk: thou art here duly elected in full mote. Stand forth, clerk. Who is the bride’s father?’

‘There is no bride’s father,’ said the baron. ‘I am the father of Matilda Fitzwater.’

‘There is none such,’ said the friar. ‘This is the fair Maid Marian. Will you make a virtue of necessity, or will you give laws to the flowing tide?’

20 Will you give her, or shall Robin take her? Will you be her true natural father, or shall I commute paternity? Stand forth, Scarlet.’

‘Stand back, sirrah Scarlet,’ said the baron. ‘My daughter shall have no father but me. Needs must when the devil drives.’

‘No matter who drives,’ said the friar, ‘so that, like a well-disposed subject, you yield cheerful obedience to those who can enforce it.’

30 ‘Mawd, sweet Mawd,’ said the baron, ‘will you then forsake your poor old father in his distress, with his castle in ashes, and his enemy in power?’

‘Not so, father,’ said Marian; ‘I will always be your true daughter: I will always love, and serve, and watch, and defend you: but neither will I forsake my plighted love, and my own liege lord, who was your choice before he was mine, for you made him my associate in infancy; and that he continued to be mine when he ceased to be yours, does not in any way show remissness in my duties or falling off in my affections. And though I here plight my troth at the altar to Robin, in the 10 presence of this holy priest and pious clerk, yet—— Father, when Richard returns from Palestine, he will restore you to your barony, and perhaps, for your sake, your daughter’s husband to the earldom of Huntingdon: should that never be, should it be the will of fate that we must live and die in the greenwood, I will live and die MAID MARIAN.’

The friar went through the ceremony with great unction, and Little John was most clerical in the intonation of his responses. After which, the friar 20 sang, and Little John fiddled, and the foresters danced, Robin with Marian, and Scarlet with the baron; and the venison smoked, and the ale frothed, and the wine sparkled, and the sun went down on their unwearied festivity; which they wound up with the following song, the friar leading and the foresters joining chorus:

Oh! bold Robin Hood is a forester good,  
As ever drew bow in the merry greenwood:  
At his bugle’s shrill singing the echoes are ringing,  
The wild deer are springing for many a rood:

Its summons we follow, through brake, over hollow,  
The thrice-blown shrill summons of bold Robin Hood.

And what eye hath e'er seen such a sweet Maiden Queen,  
As Marian, the pride of the forester's green ?  
A sweet garden-flower, she blooms in the bower,  
Where alone to this hour the wild rose has been :  
We hail her in duty the queen of all beauty :  
We will live, we will die, by our sweet Maiden Queen.

10 And here's a grey friar, good as heart can desire,  
To absolve all our sins as the case may require :  
Who with courage so stout, lays his oak-plant about,  
And puts to the rout all the foes of his choir ;  
For we are his choristers, we merry foresters,  
Chorusing thus with our militant friar.

And Scarlet doth bring his good yew-bough and string,  
Prime minister is he of Robin our king ;  
No mark is too narrow for Little John's arrow,  
That hits a cock sparrow a mile on the wing :  
Robin and Mariòn, Scarlet and Little John,  
20 Long with their glory old Sherwood shall ring.

Each a good liver, for well-feathered quiver  
Doth furnish brawn, venison, and fowl of the river :  
But the best game we dish up, it is a fat bishop :  
When his angels we fish up, he proves a free giver :  
For a prelate so lowly has angels more holy,  
And should this world's false angels to sinners deliver.

Robin and Mariòn, Scarlet and Little John,  
Drink to them one by one, drink as ye sing :  
Robin and Mariòn, Scarlet and Little John,  
30 Echo to echo through Sherwood shall fling :  
Robin and Mariòn, Scarlet and Little John,  
Long with their glofy old Sherwood shall ring.

## CHAPTER XII

THE next morning Robin Hood convened his foresters, and desired Little John, for the baron's edification, to read over the laws of their forest society. Little John read aloud with a stentorophonic voice.

'At a high court of foresters, held under the greenwood tree, an hour after sunrise, Robin Hood, President; William Scarlet, Vice-President; Little John, Secretary: the following articles, moved by Friar Tuck in his capacity of Peer Spiritual, and 10 seconded by Much the Miller, were unanimously agreed to.

'The principles of our society are five: Legitimacy, Equity, Hospitality, Chivalry, and Courtesy.

'The articles of Legitimacy are four:

'I. Our government is legitimate, and our society is founded on the one golden rule of right, consecrated by the universal consent of mankind, and by the practice of all ages, individuals, and nations: namely, To keep what we have, and to catch what 20 we can.

'II. Our government being legitimate, all our proceedings shall be legitimate: wherefore we declare war against the whole world, and every

forester is by this legitimate declaration legitimately invested with a roving commission, to make lawful prize of everything that comes in his way.

‘III. All forest laws but our own we declare to be null and void.

‘IV. All such of the old laws of England as do not in any way interfere with, or militate against, the views of this honourable assembly, we will loyally adhere to and maintain. The rest we  
10 declare null and void as far as relates to ourselves, in all cases wherein a vigour beyond the law may be conducive to our own interest and preservation.

‘The articles of Equity are three :

‘I. The balance of power among the people being very much deranged, by one having too much and another nothing, we hereby resolve ourselves into a congress or court of equity, to restore as far as in us lies the said natural balance of power, by taking from all who have too much as much of the said too  
20 much as we can lay our hands on ; and giving to those who have nothing such a portion thereof as it may seem to us expedient to part with.

‘II. In all cases a quorum of foresters shall constitute a court of equity, and as many as may be strong enough to manage the matter in hand shall constitute a quorum.

‘III. All usurers, monks, courtiers, and other drones of the great hive of society, who shall be found laden with any portion of the honey whereof  
30 they have wrongfully despoiled the industrious bee, shall be rightfully despoiled thereof in turn ; and all

bishops and abbots shall be bound and beaten, especially the Abbot of Doncaster; as shall also all sheriffs, especially the Sheriff of Nottingham.

‘The articles of Hospitality are two:

‘I. Postmen, carriers and market-folk, peasants and mechanics, farmers and millers, shall pass through our forest dominions without let or molestation.

‘II. All other travellers through the forest shall be graciously invited to partake of Robin’s hos- 10pitality; and if they come not willingly they shall be compelled; and the rich man shall pay well for his fare; and the poor man shall feast scot free, and peradventure receive bounty in proportion to his desert and necessity.

‘The article of Chivalry is one:

‘I. Every forester shall, to the extent of his power, aid and protect maids, widows, and orphans, and all weak and distressed persons whomsoever: and no woman shall be impeded or molested in any 20 way; nor shall any company receive harm which any woman is in.

‘The article of Courtesy is one:

‘I. No one shall miscall a forester. He who calls Robin Robert of Huntingdon, or salutes him by any other title or designation whatsoever except plain Robin Hood; or who calls Marian Matilda Fitzwater, or salutes her by any other title or designation whatsoever except plain Maid Marian; and so of all others; shall for every such offence 30 forfeit a mark, to be paid to the friar



‘And these articles we swear to keep as we are good men and true. Carried by acclamation. God save King Richard. LITTLE JOHN, Secretary.’

‘Excellent laws,’ said the baron; ‘excellent, by the holy rood. William of Normandy, with my great great grandfather Fierabras at his elbow, could not have made better. And now, sweet Mawd——’

‘A fine, a fine,’ cried the friar, ‘a fine, by the article of courtesy.’

10 ‘Od’s life,’ said the baron, ‘shall I not call my own daughter Mawd? Methinks there should be a special exception in my favour.’

‘It must not be,’ said Robin Hood. ‘Our constitution admits no privilege.’

‘But I will commute,’ said the friar; ‘for twenty marks a year duly paid into my ghostly pocket, you shall call your daughter Mawd two hundred times a day.’

20 ‘Gramercy,’ said the baron, ‘and I agree, honest friar, when I can get twenty marks to pay; for till Prince John be beaten from Nottingham, my rents are like to prove but scanty.’

‘I will trust,’ said the friar, ‘and thus let us ratify the stipulation; so shall our laws and your infringement run together in an amiable parallel.’

‘But,’ said Little John, ‘this is a bad precedent, master friar. It is turning discipline into profit, penalty into perquisite, public justice into private revenue. It is rank corruption, master friar.’

30 ‘Why are laws made?’ said the friar. ‘For the profit of somebody. Of whom? Of him who

make them first, and of others as it may happen. Was not I legislator in the last article, and shall I not thrive by my own law ?'

'Well then, sweet Mawd,' said the baron, 'I must leave you, Mawd. Your life is very well for the young and the hearty, but it squares not with my age or my humour. I must house, Mawd. I must find refuge: but where? That is the question.'

'Where Sir Guy of Gamwell has found it,' said Robin Hood, 'near the borders of Barnsdale. There 10 you may dwell in safety with him and fair Alice, till King Richard return, and Little John shall give you safe conduct. You will have need to travel with caution, in disguise and without attendants, for Prince John commands all this vicinity, and will doubtless lay the country for you and Marian. Now, it is first expedient to dismiss your retainers. If there be any among them who like our life, they may stay with us in the greenwood; the rest may return to their homes.'

20

Some of the baron's men resolved to remain with Robin and Marian, and were furnished accordingly with suits of green, of which Robin always kept good store.

Marian now declared that as there was danger in the way to Barnsdale, she would accompany Little John and the baron, as she should not be happy unless she herself saw her father placed in security. Robin was very unwilling to consent to this, and assured her that there was more danger for her 30 than the baron; but Marian was absolute.

‘If so, then,’ said Robin, ‘I shall be your guide instead of Little John, and I shall leave him and Scarlet joint-regents of Sherwood during my absence, and the voice of Friar Tuck shall be decisive between them if they differ in nice questions of state policy.’ Marian objected to this, that there was more danger for Robin than either herself or the baron; but Robin was absolute in his turn.

‘Talk not of my voice,’ said the friar; ‘for if  
10 Marian be a damsel errant, I will be her ghostly esquire.’

Robin insisted that this should not be, for number would only expose them to greater risk of detection. The friar, after some debate, reluctantly acquiesced.

## CHAPTER XIII

IN pursuance of the arrangement recorded in the last chapter, the baron, Robin, and Marian disguised themselves as pilgrims returned from Palestine, and travelling from the sea-coast of Hampshire to their home in Northumberland. By dint of staff and cockle-shell, sandal and scrip, they proceeded in safety the greater part of the way (for Robin had many sly inns and resting-places between Barnsdale and Sherwood), and were already on the borders of Yorkshire, when, one evening, they 10 passed within view of a castle, where they saw a lady standing on a turret, and surveying the whole extent of the valley through which they were passing. A servant came running from the castle, and delivered to them a message from his lady, who was sick with expectation of news from her lord in the Holy Land, and entreated them to come to her, that she might question them concerning him. This was an awkward occurrence: but there was no pretence for refusal, and they followed the servant 20 into the castle. The baron, who had been in Palestine in his youth, undertook to be spokesman on the occasion, and to relate his own adventures to the lady as having happened to the lord in question.

This preparation enabled him to be so minute and circumstantial in his detail, and so coherent in his replies to her questions, that the lady fell implicitly into the delusion, and was delighted to find that her lord was alive and in health, and in high favour with the king, and performing prodigies of valour in the name of his lady, whose miniature he always wore in his bosom. The baron guessed at this circumstance from the customs of that age, and  
10 happened to be in the right.

‘The miniature,’ added the baron, ‘I have had the felicity to see, and should have known you by it among a million.’ The baron was a little embarrassed by some questions of the lady concerning her lord’s personal appearance; but Robin came to his aid, observing a picture suspended opposite to him on the wall, which he made a bold conjecture to be that of the lord in question; and making a calculation of the influences of time and war, which he  
20 weighed with a comparison of the lady’s age, he gave a description of her lord sufficiently like the picture in its ground-work to be a true resemblance, and sufficiently differing from it in circumstances to be more an original than a copy. The lady was completely deceived, and entreated them to partake her hospitality for the night; but this they deemed it prudent to decline, and with many humble thanks for her kindness, and representations of the necessity of not delaying their homeward course,  
30 they proceeded on their way.

As they passed over the drawbridge, they met

Sir Ralph Montfaucon and his squire, who were wandering in quest of Marian, and were entering to claim that hospitality which the pilgrims had declined. Their countenances struck Sir Ralph with a kind of imperfect recognition, which would never have been matured, but that the eyes of Marian, as she passed him, encountered his, and the images of those stars of beauty continued involuntarily twinkling in his sensorium to the exclusion of all other ideas, till memory, love, and hope concurred with 10 imagination to furnish a probable reason for their haunting him so pertinaciously. Those eyes, he thought, were certainly the eyes of Matilda Fitzwater; and if the eyes were hers, it was extremely probable, if not logically consecutive, that the rest of the body they belonged to was hers also. Now, if it were really Matilda Fitzwater, who were her two companions? The baron? Ay, and the elder pilgrim was something like him. And the Earl of Huntingdon? Very probably. The earl and the 20 baron might be good friends again, now that they were both in disgrace together. While he was revolving these cogitations, he was introduced to the lady, and after claiming and receiving the promise of hospitality, he inquired what she knew of the pilgrims who had just departed. The lady told him they were newly returned from Palestine, having been long in the Holy Land. The knight expressed some scepticism on this point. The lady replied, that they had given her so minute a detail 30 of her lord's proceedings, and so accurate a description

of his person, that she could not be deceived in them. This staggered the knight's confidence in his own penetration. But while the lady and the knight were conversing, the warder blew his bugle-horn, and presently entered a confidential messenger from Palestine, who gave her to understand that her lord was well: but entered into a detail of his adventures most completely at variance with the baron's narrative, to which not the correspondence  
10 of a single incident gave the remotest colouring of similarity. It now became manifest that the pilgrims were not true men; and Sir Ralph Montfaucon sate down to supper with his head full of cogitations, which we shall leave him to chew and digest with his pheasant and canary.

Meanwhile our three pilgrims proceeded on their way. The evening set in black and lowering, when Robin turned aside from the main track, to seek an asylum for the night, along a narrow way that led  
20 between rocky and woody hills. A peasant observed the pilgrims as they entered that narrow pass, and called after them: 'Whither go you, my masters? there are rogues in that direction.'

'Can you show us a direction,' said Robin, 'in which there are none? If so, we will take it in preference.' The peasant grinned, and walked away whistling.

The pass widened as they advanced, and the woods grew thicker and darker around them. Their  
30 path wound along the slope of a woody declivity, which rose high above them in a thick rampart of

foliage, and descended almost precipitously to the bed of a small river, which they heard dashing in its rocky channel, and saw its white foam gleaming at intervals in the last faint glimmerings of twilight. In a short time all was dark, and the rising voice of the wind foretold a coming storm. They turned a point of the valley, and saw a light below them in the depth of the hollow, shining through a cottage-casement and dancing in its reflection on the restless stream. Robin blew his horn, which was answered 10 from below. The cottage door opened; a boy came forth with a torch, ascended the steep, showed tokens of great delight at meeting with Robin, and lighted them down a flight of steps rudely cut in the rock, and over a series of rugged stepping-stones, that crossed the channel of the river. They entered the cottage, which exhibited neatness, comfort, and plenty, being amply enriched with pots, pans, and pipkins, and adorned with fitches of bacon and sundry similar ornaments, that gave 20 goodly promise in the firelight that gleamed upon the rafters. A woman, who seemed just old enough to be the boy's mother, had thrown down her spinning wheel in her joy at the sound of Robin's horn, and was bustling with singular alacrity to set forth her festal ware and prepare an abundant supper. Her features, though not beautiful, were agreeable and expressive, and were now lighted up with such manifest joy at the sight of Robin, that Marian could not help feeling a momentary touch of 30 jealousy. However, this feeling, if it could be said



to exist in a mind so generous as Marian's, was very soon dissipated by the entrance of the woman's husband, who testified as much joy as his wife had done at the sight of Robin; and in a short time the whole of the party were amicably seated round a smoking supper of river-fish and wild wood-fowl, on which the baron fell with as much alacrity as if he had been a true pilgrim from Palestine.

The husband produced some recondite flasks of  
10 wine, which were laid by in a binn consecrated to Robin, whose occasional visits to them in his wanderings were the festal days of these warm-hearted cottagers, whose manners showed that they had not been born to this low estate. Their story had no mystery, and Marian easily collected it from the tenor of their conversation. The young man had been, like Robin, the victim of an usurious abbot, and had been outlawed for debt, and his nut-brown maid had accompanied him to the depths of  
20 Sherwood, where they lived an unholy and illegitimate life, killing the king's deer, and never hearing mass. In this state, Robin, then Earl of Huntingdon, discovered them in one of his huntings, and gave them aid and protection. When Robin himself became an outlaw, he had found them a retreat in this romantic and secluded spot. He had done similar service to others, and had disposed them in various wild scenes which he and his men had discovered in their flittings from place to place,  
30 supplying them with all necessaries and comforts from the reluctant disgorgings of fat abbots and

usurers. The benefit was in some measure mutual ; for these cottages served him as resting-places in his removals, and enabled him to travel untraced and unmolested ; and in the delight with which he was always received he found himself even more welcome than he would have been at an inn ; and this is saying very much for gratitude and affection together. The smiles which surrounded him were of his own creation, and he participated in the happiness he had bestowed.

10

The casements began to rattle in the wind, and the rain to beat upon the windows. The wind swelled to a hurricane, and the rain dashed like a flood against the glass. The boy retired to his little bed, the wife trimmed the lamp, the husband heaped logs upon the fire : Robin broached another flask ; and Marian filled the baron's cup, and sweetened Robin's by touching its edge with her lips.

'Well,' said the baron, 'give me a roof over my head, be it never so humble. Your greenwood 20 canopy is pretty and pleasant in sunshine ; but if I were doomed to live under it, I should wish it were water-tight.'

'But,' said Robin, 'we have tents and caves for foul weather, good store of wine and venison, and fuel in abundance.'

'Ay, but,' said the baron, 'I like to pull off my boots of a night, which you foresters seldom do, and to ensconce myself thereafter in a comfortable bed. Your beech-root is overhard for a couch, and your 30 mossy stump is somewhat rough for a 'bolster.'

‘Had you not dry leaves,’ said Robin, ‘with a bishop’s surplice over them? What would you have softer? And had you not an abbot’s travelling coat for a coverlet? What would you have warmer?’

‘Very true,’ said the baron, ‘but that was an indulgence to a guest, and I dreamed all night of the Sheriff of Nottingham. I like to feel myself safe,’ he added, stretching out his legs to the fire, 10 and throwing himself back in his chair with the air of a man determined to be comfortable. ‘I like to feel myself safe,’ said the baron.

At that moment the woman caught her husband’s arm, and all the party following the direction of her eyes, looked simultaneously to the window, where they had just time to catch a glimpse of an apparition of an armed head, with its plumage tossing in the storm, on which the light shone from within, and which disappeared immediately.

## CHAPTER XIV

SEVERAL knocks, as from the knuckles of an iron glove, were given to the door of the cottage, and a voice was heard entreating shelter from the storm for a traveller who had lost his way. Robin arose and went to the door.

‘What are you?’ said Robin.

‘A soldier,’ replied the voice; ‘an unfortunate adherent of Longchamp, flying the vengeance of Prince John.’

‘Are you alone?’ said Robin. 10

‘Yes,’ said the voice: ‘it is a dreadful night. Hospitable cottagers, pray give me admittance. I would not have asked it but for the storm. I would have kept my watch in the woods.’

‘That I believe,’ said Robin. ‘You did not reckon on this storm when you turned into this pass. Do you know there are rogues this way?’

‘I do,’ said the voice.

‘So do I,’ said Robin. 20

A pause ensued, during which Robin, listening attentively, caught a faint sound of whispering.

‘You are not alone,’ said Robin. ‘Who are your companions?’

‘None but the wind and the water,’ said the voice, ‘and I would I had them not.’

‘The wind and the water have many voices,’ said Robin, ‘but I never before heard them say, “What shall we do?”’

Another pause ensued; after which,

‘Look ye, master cottager,’ said the voice in an altered tone, ‘if you do not let us in willingly, we will break down the door.’

10 ‘Ho! ho!’ roared the baron; ‘you are become plural, are you, rascals? How many are there of you, thieves? What, I warrant, you thought to rob and murder a poor harmless cottager and his wife, and did not dream of a garrison? You looked for no weapon of opposition but spit, poker, and basting ladle, wielded by unskilful hands: but, rascals, here is short sword and long cudgel in hands well tried in war, wherewith you shall be drilled into cullenders and beaten into mummy.’

20 No reply was made, but furious strokes from without resounded upon the door. Robin, Marian, and the baron threw by their pilgrim’s attire, and stood in arms on the defensive. •They were provided with swords, and the cottager gave them bucklers and helmets, for all Robin’s haunts were furnished with secret armouries. But they kept their swords sheathed, and the baron wielded a ponderous spear, which he pointed towards the door ready to run through the first that should enter,  
30 and Robin and Marian each held a bow with the arrow drawn to its head and pointed in the same

direction. The cottager flourished a strong cudgel (a weapon in the use of which he prided himself on being particularly expert), and the wife seized the spit from the fireplace, and held it as she saw the baron hold his spear. The storm of wind and rain continued to beat on the roof and the casement, and the storm of blows to resound upon the door, which at length gave way with a violent crash, and a cluster of armed men appeared without, seemingly not less than twelve. Behind them rolled the 10 stream, now changed from a gentle and shallow river to a mighty and impetuous torrent, roaring in waves of yellow foam, partially reddened by the light that streamed through the open door, and turning up its convulsed surface in flashes of shifting radiance from restless masses of half-visible shadow. The stepping-stones, by which the intruders must have crossed, were buried under the waters. On the opposite bank the light fell on the stems and boughs of the rock-rooted oak and ash tossing and 20 swaying in the blast, and sweeping the flashing spray with their leaves.

The instant the door broke, Robin and Marian loosed their arrows, Robin's arrow struck one of the assailants in the juncture of the shoulder, and disabled his right arm: Marian's struck a second in the juncture of the knee, and rendered him unserviceable for the night. The baron's long spear struck on the mailed breastplate of a third, and being stretched to its full extent by the long-armed 30 hero, drove him to the edge of the torrent, and

plunged him into its eddies, along which he was whirled down the darkness of the descending stream, calling vainly on his comrades for aid, till his voice was lost in the mingled roar of the waters and the wind. A fourth springing through the door was laid prostrate by the cottager's cudgel: but the wife being less dexterous than her company, though an Amazon in strength, missed her pass at a fifth, and drove the point of the spit several  
10 inches into the right hand door-post as she stood close to the left, and thus made a new barrier which the invaders could not pass without dipping under it and submitting their necks to the sword: but one of the assailants seizing it with gigantic rage, shook it at once from the grasp of its holder and from its lodgment in the post, and at the same time made good the irruption of the rest of his party into the cottage.

Now raged an unequal combat, for the assailants  
20 fell two to one on Robin, Marian, the baron, and the cottager; while the wife, being deprived of her spit, converted everything that was at hand to a missile, and rained pots, pans, and pipkins on the armed heads of the enemy. The baron raged like a tiger, and the cottager laid about him like a thresher. One of the soldiers struck Robin's sword from his hand and brought him on his knee, when the boy, who had been roused by the tumult and had been peeping through the inner door, leaped  
30 forward in his shirt, picked up the sword and replaced it in Robin's hand, who instantly springing

up, disarmed and wounded one of his antagonists, while the other was laid prostrate under the dint of a brass cauldron launched by the Amazonian dame. Robin now turned to the aid of Marian, who was parrying most dexterously the cuts and slashes of her two assailants, of whom Robin delivered her from one, while a well-applied blow of her sword struck off the helmet of the other, who fell on his knees to beg a boon, and she recognised Sir Ralph Montfaucon. The men who were engaged with the 10 baron and the peasant, seeing their leader subdued, immediately laid down their arms and cried for quarter. The wife brought some strong rope, and the baron tied their arms behind them.

‘Now, Sir Ralph,’ said Marian, ‘once more you are at my mercy.’

‘That I always am, cruel beauty,’ said the discomfited lover.

‘Odso! courteous knight,’ said the baron, ‘is this the return you make for my beef and canary, when 20 you kissed my daughter’s hand in token of contrition for your intermeddling at her wedding? Heart, I am glad to see she has given you a bloody coxcomb. Slice him down, Mawd! slice him down, and fling him into the river.’

‘Confess,’ said Marian, ‘what brought you here, and how did you trace our steps?’

‘I will confess nothing,’ said the knight.

‘Then confess you, rascal,’ said the baron, holding his sword to the throat of the captive squire. 30

‘Take away the sword,’ said the squire, ‘it is



too near my mouth, and my voice will not come out for fear: take away the sword, and I will confess all.' The baron dropped his sword, and the squire proceeded: 'Sir Ralph met you, as you quitted Lady Falkland's castle, and by representing to her who you were, borrowed from her such a number of her retainers as he deemed must ensure your capture, seeing that your familiar the friar was not at your elbow. We set forth without delay, and  
10 traced you first by means of a peasant who saw you turn into this valley, and afterwards by the light from the casement of this solitary dwelling. Our design was to have laid an ambush for you in the morning, but the storm and your observation of my unlucky face through the casement made us change our purpose; and what followed you can tell better than I can, being indeed masters of the subject.'

'You are a merry knave,' said the baron, 'and here is a cup of wine for you.'

20 'Gramercy,' said the squire, 'and better late than never; but I lacked a cup of this before. Had I been pot-valiant, I had held you play.'

'Sir knight,' said Marian, 'this is the third time you have sought the life of my lord and of me, for mine is interwoven with his. And do you think me so spiritless as to believe that I can be yours by compulsion? Tempt me not again, for the next time shall be the last, and the fish of the nearest river shall commute the flesh of a recreant knight  
30 into the fast-day dinner of an uncarnivorous friar. I spare you now, not in pity but in scorn. Yet

shall you swear to a convention never more to pursue or molest my lord or me, and on this condition you shall live.'

The knight had no alternative but to comply, and swore, on the honour of knighthood, to keep the convention inviolate. How well he kept his oath we shall have no opportunity of narrating.

The pilgrims, without experiencing further molestation, arrived at the retreat of Sir Guy of Gamwell. They found the old knight a cup too 10 low; partly from being cut off from the scenes of his old hospitality and the shouts of his Nottinghamshire vassals, who were wont to make the rafters of his ancient hall re-echo to their revelry; but principally from being parted from his son, who had long been the better half of his flask and pasty. The arrival of our visitors cheered him up; and finding that the baron was to remain with him, he testified his delight and the cordiality of his welcome by pegging him in the ribs till he made 20 him roar. . . .

Next morning a forester came with intelligence that Prince John had been compelled, by the urgency of his affairs in other quarters, to disembarass Nottingham Castle of his Royal presence. Our wanderers returned joyfully to their forest-dominion, being thus relieved from the vicinity of any more formidable belligerent than their old bruised and beaten enemy the Sheriff of Nottingham.

## CHAPTER XV

So Robin and Marian dwelt and reigned in the forest, ranging the glades and the greenwoods from the matins of the lark to the vespers of the nightingale, and administering natural justice according to Robin's ideas of rectifying the inequalities of human condition: raising genial dews from the bags of the rich and idle, and returning them in fertilising showers on the poor and industrious: an operation which more enlightened statesmen have happily  
10 reversed, to the unspeakable benefit, of the community at large. The light footsteps of Marian were impressed on the morning dew beside the firmer step of her lover, and they shook its large drops about them as they cleared themselves a passage through the thick tall fern, without any fear of catching cold, which was not much in fashion in the twelfth century. Marian often killed the deer,

20        Which Scarlet dressed, and Friar Tuck blessed,  
          While Little John wandered in search of a guest.

Robin was very devout, though there was great unity in his religion: it was exclusively given to our Lady the Virgin, and he never set forth in a morning till he had said three prayers, and had

heard the sweet voice of his Marian singing a hymn to their mutual patroness. Each of his men had, as usual, a patron saint according to his name or taste. The friar chose a saint for himself, and fixed on Saint Botolph, whom he euphonised into Saint Bottle. Such was their summer life, and in their winter caves they had sufficient furniture, ample provender, store of old wine, and assuredly no lack of fuel, with joyous music and pleasant discourse to charm away the season of darkness 10 and storms.

Many moons had waxed and waned, when on the afternoon of a lovely summer day a lusty, broad-boned knight was riding through the Forest of Sherwood. The sun shone brilliantly on the full green foliage, and afforded the knight a fine opportunity of observing picturesque effects, of which it is to be feared he did not avail himself. But he had not proceeded far before he had an opportunity of observing something much more interesting, 20 namely, a fine young outlaw leaning, in the true Sherwood fashion, with his back against a tree. The knight was preparing to ask the stranger a question, the answer to which, if correctly given, would have relieved him from a doubt that pressed heavily on his mind, as to whether he was in the right road or the wrong, when the youth prevented the inquiry by saying: 'In God's name, sir knight, you are late to your meals. My master has tarried dinner for you these three hours.'

30

'I doubt,' said the knight, 'I am not he you wot

of. I am nowhere bidden to-day, and I know none in this vicinage.'

'We feared,' said the youth, 'your memory would be treacherous: therefore am I stationed here to refresh it.'

'Who is your master?' said the knight; 'and where does he abide?'

'My master,' said the youth, 'is called Robin Hood, and he abides hard by.'

10 'And what knows he of me?' said the knight.

'He knows you,' answered the youth, 'as he does every wayfaring knight and friar, by instinct.'

'Gramercy,' said the knight; 'then I understand his bidding: but how if I say I will not come?'

'I am enjoined to bring you,' said the youth. 'If persuasion avail not, I must use other argument.'

'Say'st thou so?' said the knight; 'I doubt if thy stripling rhetoric would convince me.'

20 'That,' said the young forester, 'we will see.'

'We are not equally matched, boy,' said the knight. 'I should get less honour by thy conquest, than grief by thy injury.'

'Perhaps,' said the youth, 'my strength is more than my seeming, and my cunning more than my strength. Therefore let it please your knighthood to dismount.'

'It shall please my knighthood to chastise thy presumption,' said the knight, springing from his saddle.

Hereupon, which in those days was usually the





'I say,' answered the knight, 'that if this be indeed a lady, man never yet held me so long.'

[See page 111.]

result of a meeting between any two persons anywhere, they proceeded to fight.

The knight had in an uncommon degree both strength and skill: the forester had less strength, but not less skill than the knight, and showed such a mastery of his weapon as reduced the latter to great admiration.

They had not fought many minutes by the forest clock, the sun; and had as yet done each other no worse injury than that the knight had wounded the 10 forester's jerkin, and the forester had disabled the knight's plume; when they were interrupted by a voice from a thicket, exclaiming, 'Well fought, girl: well fought. Mass, that had nigh been a shrewd hit. Thou owest him for that, lass. Marry, stand by, I'll pay him for thee.'

The knight turning to the voice, beheld a tall friar issuing from the thicket, brandishing a ponderous cudgel.

'Who art thou?' said the knight. 20

'I am the church militant of Sherwood,' answered the friar. 'Why art thou in arms against our lady queen?'

'What meanest thou?' said the knight.

'Truly, this,' said the friar, 'is our liege lady of the forest, against whom I do apprehend thee in overt act of treason. What sayest thou for thyself?'

'I say,' answered the knight, 'that if this be indeed a lady, man never yet held me so long.'

'Spoken,' said the friar, 'like one who hath done 30 execution. Hast thou thy stomach full of steel?'



Wilt thou diversify thy repast with a taste of my oak-graff? Or wilt thou incline thine heart to our venison, which truly is cooling? Wilt thou fight? or wilt thou dine? or wilt thou fight and dine? or wilt thou dine and fight? I am for thee, choose as thou mayest.'

'I will dine,' said the knight; 'for with lady I never fought before, and with friar I never fought yet, and with neither will I ever fight knowingly: 10 and if this be the queen of the forest, I will not, being in her own dominions, be backward to do her homage.'

So saying, he kissed the hand of Marian, who was pleased most graciously to express her approbation.

'Gramercy, sir knight,' said the friar, 'I laud thee for thy courtesy, which I deem to be no less than thy valour. Now do thou follow me, while I follow my nose, which scents the pleasant odour of 20 roast from the depth of the forest recesses. I will lead thy horse, and do thou lead my lady.'

The knight took Marian's hand, and followed the friar, who walked before them, singing:

When the wind blows, when the wind blows  
From where under buck the dry log glows,  
What guide can you follow,  
O'er break and o'er hollow,  
So true as a ghostly, ghostly nose?

## CHAPTER XVI

THEY proceeded, following their infallible guide, first along a light elastic greensward under the shade of lofty and widespreading trees that skirted a sunny opening of the forest, then along labyrinthine paths, which the deer, the outlaw, or the woodman had made, through the close shoots of the young coppices, through the thick undergrowth of the ancient woods, through beds of gigantic fern that filled the narrow glades and waved their green feathery heads above the plume of the knight. Along these sylvan 10 alleys they walked in single file; the friar singing and pioneering in the van, the horse plunging and floundering behind the friar, the lady following 'in maiden meditation fancy-free,' and the knight bringing up the rear, much marvelling at the strange company into which his stars had thrown him. Their path had expanded sufficiently to allow the knight to take Marian's hand again, when they arrived in the august presence of Robin Hood and his court.

20

Robin's table was spread under a high overarch-  
ing canopy of living boughs, on the edge of a  
natural lawn of verdure, starred with flowers,  
through which a swift transparent rivulet ran,

sparkling in the sun. The board was covered with abundance of choice food and excellent liquor, not without the comeliness of snow-white linen and the splendour of costly plate, which the Sheriff of Nottingham had unwillingly contributed to supply, at the same time with an excellent cook, whom Little John's art had spirited away to the forest with the contents of his master's silver scullery.

An hundred foresters were here assembled, over-  
10 ready for their dinner, some seated at the table and some lying in groups under the trees.

Robin made courteous welcome to the knight, who took his seat between Robin and Marian at the festal board; at which was already placed one strange guest in the person of a portly monk, sitting between Little John and Scarlet, with his rotund physiognomy elongated into an unnatural oval by the conjoint influence of sorrow and fear: sorrow for the departed contents of his travelling treasury,  
20 a good-looking valise which was hanging empty on a bough; and fear for his personal safety, of which all the flasks and pasties before him could not give him assurance. The appearance of the knight, however, cheered him up with a semblance of protection, and gave him just sufficient courage to demolish a cygnet and a numble-pie, which he diluted with the contents of two flasks of canary sack.

But wine, which sometimes creates and often increases joy, doth also, upon occasion, heighten  
30 sorrow: and so it fared now with our portly monk, who had no sooner explained away his portion of

provender, than he began to weep and bewail himself bitterly.

‘Why dost thou weep, man?’ said Robin Hood. ‘Thou hast done thine embassy justly, and shalt have thy Lady’s grace.’

‘Alack! alack!’ said the monk: ‘no embassy had I, luckless sinner, as well thou wottest, but to take to my abbey in safety the treasure whereof thou hast despoiled me.’

‘Propound me his case,’ said Friar Tuck, ‘and I 10 will give him ghostly counsel.’

‘You well remember,’ said Robin Hood, ‘the sorrowful knight who dined with us here twelve months and a day gone by?’

‘Well do I,’ said Friar Tuck. ‘His lands were in jeopardy with a certain abbot, who would allow no longer day for their redemption. Whereupon you lent to him the four hundred pounds which he needed, and which he was to repay this day, though he had no better security to give than our Lady the Virgin.’ 20

‘I never desired better,’ said Robin, ‘for she never yet failed to send me my pay; and here is one of her own flock, this faithful and well-favoured monk of St. Mary’s, hath brought it me duly, principal and interest to a penny, as Little John can testify, who told it forth. To be sure, he denied having it, but that was to prove our faith. We sought and found it.’

‘I know nothing of your knight,’ said the monk: ‘and the money was our own, as the Virgin shall 30 bless me.’

‘She shall bless thee,’ said Friar Tuck, ‘for a faithful messenger.’

The monk resumed his wailing. Little John brought him his horse. Robin gave him leave to depart. He sprang with singular nimbleness into the saddle, and vanished without saying, God give you good day.

The stranger knight laughed heartily as the monk rode off.

10 ‘They say, sir knight,’ said Friar Tuck, ‘they should laugh who win: but thou laughest who are likely to lose.’

‘I have won,’ said the knight, ‘a good dinner, some mirth, and some knowledge: and I cannot lose by paying for them.’

‘Bravely said,’ answered Robin. ‘Still it becomes thee to pay: for it is not meet that a poor forester should treat a rich knight. How much money hast thou with thee?’

20 ‘Troth, I know not,’ said the knight. ‘Sometimes much, sometimes little, sometimes none. But search, and what thou findest, keep: and for the sake of thy kind heart and open hand, be it what it may, I shall wish it were more.’

‘Then, since thou sayest so,’ said Robin, ‘not a penny will I touch. Many a false churl comes hither, and disburses against his will: and till there is lack of these, I prey not on true men.’

30 ‘Thou art thyself a true man, right well I judge, Robin,’ said the stranger knight, ‘and seemest more like one bred in court than to thy present outlaw life.’

‘Our life,’ said the friar, ‘is a craft, an art, and a mystery. How much of it, think you, could be learned at court?’

‘Indeed, I cannot say,’ said the stranger knight: ‘but I should apprehend very little.’

‘And so should I,’ said the friar: ‘for we should find very little of our bold open practice, but should hear abundance of praise of our principles. To live in seeming fellowship and secret rivalry; to have a hand for all, and a heart for none; to be every- 10 body’s acquaintance, and nobody’s friend; to meditate the ruin of all on whom we smile, and to dread the secret stratagems of all who smile on us; to pilfer honours and despoil fortunes, not by fighting in daylight, but by sapping in darkness: these are arts which the court can teach, but which we, by ‘r Lady, have not learned. But let your court minstrel tune up his throat to the praise of your court hero, then come our principles into play: then is our practice extolled: not by the same name, for their 20 Richard is a hero, and our Robin is a thief: marry, your hero guts an exchequer, while your thief disembowels a portmanteau; your hero sacks a city, while your thief sacks a cellar: your hero marauds on a larger scale, and that is all the difference, for the principle and the virtue are one: but two of a trade cannot agree: therefore your hero makes laws to get rid of your thief, and gives him an ill name that he may hang him: for might is right, and the strong make laws for 30 the weak, and they that make laws to serve

their own turn do also make morals to give colour to their laws.'

'Your comparison, friar,' said the stranger, 'fails in this: that your thief fights for profit, and your hero for honour. I have fought under the banners of Richard, and if, as you phrase it, he guts exchequers, and sacks cities, it is not to win treasure for himself, but to furnish forth the means of his greater and more glorious aim.'

- 10 'Misconceive me not, sir knight,' said the friar. 'We all love and honour King Richard, and here is a deep draught to his health: but I would show you, that we foresters are miscalled by opprobrious names, and that our virtues, though they follow at humble distance, are yet truly akin to those of Cœur de Lion. I say not that Richard is a thief, but I say that Robin is a hero: and for honour, did ever yet man, miscalled thief, win greater honour than Robin? Do not all men grace him with some
- 20 honourable epithet? The most gentle thief, the most courteous thief, the most bountiful thief, yea, and the most honest thief. Richard is courteous, bountiful, honest, and valiant, but so also is Robin: it is the false word that makes the unjust distinction. They are twin spirits, and should be friends, but that fortune hath differently cast their lot; but their names shall descend together to the latest
- days, as the flower of their age and of England; for in the 'pure principles' of freebootery
- 30 have they excelled all men; and to the principles of freebootery, diversely developed, belong all

the qualities to which song and story concede renown.'

'And you may add, friar,' said Marian, 'that Robin, no less than Richard, is king in his own dominion; and that if his subjects be fewer, yet are they more uniformly loyal.'

'I would, fair lady,' said the stranger, 'that thy latter observation were not so true. But I nothing doubt, Robin, that if Richard could hear your friar, and see you and your lady as I now do, there is not 10 a man in England whom he would take by the hand more cordially than yourself.'

'Gramercy, sir knight,' said Robin—— But his speech was cut short by Little John calling, 'Hark!'

All listened. A distant trampling of horses was heard. The sounds approached rapidly, and at length a group of horsemen glittering in holiday dresses was visible among the trees.

'God's my life!' said Robin, 'what means this? 20 To arms, my merry-men all.'

'No arms, Robin,' said the foremost horseman, riding up and springing from his saddle. 'Have you forgotten Sir William of the Lee?'

'No, by my fay,' said Robin; 'and right welcome again to Sherwood.'

Little John bustled to rearrange the disorganised economy of the table, and replace the dilapidations of the provender.

'I come late, Robin,' said Sir William, 'but I 30 came by a wrestling, where I found a good yeoman



wrongfully beset by a crowd of sturdy varlets, and I stayed to do him right.'

'I thank thee for that, in God's name,' said Robin, 'as if thy good service had been to myself.'

'And here,' said the knight, 'is thy four hundred pounds; and my men have brought thee an hundred bows and as many well-furnished quivers; which I beseech thee to receive and to use as a poor token of my grateful kindness to thee: for me and my  
10 wife and children didst thou redeem from beggary.'

'Thy bows and arrows,' said Robin, 'will I joyfully receive: but of thy money, not a penny. It is paid already. My Lady, who was thy security, hath sent it me for thee.'

Sir William pressed, but Robin was inflexible.

'It is paid,' said Robin, 'as this good knight can testify, who saw my Lady's messenger depart but now.'

Sir William looked round to the stranger knight, and instantly fell on his knees, saying, 'God save  
20 King Richard.'

The foresters, friar and all, dropped on their knees together, and repeated in chorus: 'God save King Richard.'

'Rise, rise,' said Richard, smiling: 'Robin is king here, as his lady hath shown. I have heard much of thee, Robin, both of thy present and thy former state. And this, thy fair forest-queen, is, if tales say true, the Lady Matilda Fitzwater.'

Marian signed acknowledgment.

30 'Your father,' said the king, 'has approved his fidelity to me, by the loss of his lands, which the

newness of my return, and many public cares, has not yet given me time to restore: but this justice shall be done to him, and to thee also, Robin, if thou wilt leave thy forest-life and resume thy earldom, and be a peer of Cœur de Lion: for braver heart and juster hand I never yet found.'

Robin looked round on his men.

'Your followers,' said the king, 'shall have free pardon, and such of them as thou wilt part with shall have maintenance from me; and if ever I 10 confess to priest, it shall be to thy friar.'

'Gramercy to your majesty,' said the friar; 'and my inflictions shall be flasks of canary; and if the number be (as in grave cases I may, peradventure, make it) too great for one frail mortality, I will relieve you by vicarious penance, and pour down my own throat the redundancy of the burden.'

Robin and his followers embraced the king's proposal. A joyful meeting soon followed with the baron and Sir Guy of Gamwell: and Richard 20 himself honoured with his own presence a formal solemnisation of the nuptials of our lovers, whom he constantly distinguished with his peculiar regard.

The friar could not say farewell to the forest without something of a heavy heart: and he sang as he turned his back upon its bounds, occasionally reverting his head:

Ye woods, that oft at sultry noon  
Have o'er me spread your massy shade:  
Ye gushing streams, whose murmured tune  
Has in my ear sweet music made,

While, where the dancing pebbles show  
Deep in the restless mountain-pool  
The gelid water's upward flow,  
My second flask was laid to cool :

Ye pleasant sights of leaf and flower :  
Ye pleasant sounds of bird and bee :  
Ye sports of deer in sylvan bower :  
Ye feasts beneath the greenwood tree :  
Ye baskings in the vernal sun :  
Ye slumbers in the summer dell :  
Ye trophies that this arm has won :  
And must you hear your friar's farewell ?

10

But the friar's farewell was not destined to be eternal. He was domiciled as the family confessor of the Earl and Countess of Huntingdon, who led a discreet and courtly life, and kept up old hospitality in all its munificence, till the death of King Richard and the usurpation of John, by placing their enemy in power, compelled them to return to their green-  
20 wood sovereignty; which, it is probable, they would have before done from choice, if their love of sylvan liberty had not been counteracted by their desire to retain the friendship of Cœur de Lion. Their old and tried adherents, the friar among the foremost, flocked again round their forest-banner; and in merry Sherwood they long lived together, the lady retaining her former name of Maid Marian.

## NOTES

P. 1. 5. **the noble Robert Fitz-Ooth.** According to Joseph Ritson (who published a collection of Robin Hood Ballads in 1795) Robert Fitzooth (of which name he supposed Robin Hood to be a corruption) was born at Locksley in Nottinghamshire in 1160, and died in 1247. It is not until the seventeenth century that we find him made Earl of Huntingdon. The real Earl at this time was David, brother of the king of Scotland. The name **Matilda Fitzwater** Peacock probably found in an old play. Maid Marian is not found in the oldest ballads.

7. **the abbey of Rubygill**, of course imaginary. It is as well to note that there were no *friars* in England before the time of Henry III., nor did friars live the same cloistered life as monks. Peacock calls them friars doubtless because he wishes to obtain Friar Tuck from the Abbey.

9. **Sherwood Forest**, in Nottinghamshire. (Old spelling, Shirewood.)

10. **monastic mortification**, by fasting. Peacock, following the old ballads, writes satirically throughout of the Church. The fact that the popular ballads show such dislike of the monks proves what great abuses the religious houses must have harboured before their suppression.

P. 4. 14. **my only saint, our Lady** : cf. note on P. 108, 22, and

‘Robin loved our dear Lady :  
For doubt [fear] of deadly sin  
Would he no company do harm  
That woman was therein.’

*A Little Geste of Hobin Hood.*

P. 5. 1. **green tea**—more fashionable a hundred years ago than now.

12. **stand upon the order of their going** : *Macbeth*, III. iv. 119.

P. 6. 3. **unarmed neutrality** : a play on the technical phrase ‘armed neutrality,’ e.g. the alliance of the Baltic Powers in 1780.

29. **forest-treason**, breach of the forest laws (for which see any history book); they were separate from the Common Law. Their cruelty naturally bred outlaws.

P. 7. 24. **pillars of the faith** : cf. cardinal, from Lat. *cardo*, a hinge.

P. 9. 13. **an exact economist**, etc. : i.e. she was generous in giving, though thrifty in avoiding waste.

17. **in all opposite proposings** : i.e. in all questions which required settlement.

24. **Arachne**, a maiden who was turned into a spider, as a punishment for challenging Minerva to a trial in spinning. (Arachne is the Greek for spider.)

**Sirens**, the enchanting singers by whom Odysseus sailed. See *Odyssey*, XII.

P. 10. 29. '**The bramble, the bramble**' : this song was the hit of the comic opera based on *Maid Marian* (see Introduction, p. x). Thackeray, in *The Great Hoggarty Diamond*, speaks of a character always 'singing

"The bramble, the bramble,  
The jolly, jolly bramble!"

one of Charles Kemble's famous songs in "*Maid Marian*"; a play that was all the rage then, taken from a famous story-book by one Peacock, a clerk in the India House; and a precious good place he has too.'

P. 12. 5. **the memorable hunting of Cheviot**. • Ballad of Chevy Chase.

7. **forest-laws** : see note on 6, 29. Loss of the eyes, etc., was the penalty for killing deer.

14. **Saint Botolph**, a saint of the seventh century. Peacock's choice of the name is doubtless explained by 109, 5.

P. 15. 21. **damsel errant** (cf. 92, 10) : wandering, as Una in the *Faerie Queene*.

22. **friar militant** : there was of course no order of military friars, such as the Knights Hospitallers of St. John and the Templars.

23. **armour of proof** : i.e. of tried strength (cf. waterproof, etc.).

P. 16. 7. **Saint Peter**, supposed to be the door-keeper of Heaven.

11. **most prolific in self-propagation** : i.e. fear increases most rapidly and one produces others.

P. 18. 10. **Fierabras** : of course imaginary. (The name comes from the old poems connected with Charlemagne.)

13. **Saxon cavaliers** : in reality the English fought on foot.

19. What exactly was the *dilemma*?

P. 21. 8. Peacock has made this speech of the baron's particularly modern in tone.

16. **He urges not**, etc. : *i.e.* he gives this reason as an excuse thought of after the deed, not as his purpose in doing it.

P. 22. 11. **with my glove**: throwing down the glove (or gauntlet) as a challenge.

14. **concede nothing in honour**: *i.e.* not surrender a particle of honour. Ralph used the phrase to mean 'give up anything that can be given up honourably.'

P. 29. 31. **thirty-two invisible arrows**: the number of points in 'boxing' the compass. **Pericardia**, see Glossary.

P. 34. 6. A good example of simile passing into metaphor. See **overshot** and **flash-boards** in Glossary.

13. **Ajax**, in the combat with Hector. *Iliad*, VII. 268.

P. 38. 28. **translate**: used in the Bible to mean conveying to heaven *without death*.

P. 41. 14. **Gamwell feast**: the festivities described are those of May Day, on which Robin Hood was specially celebrated. See Introduction, p. viii, and Chambers, *Book of Days*, i. p. 580. Gamwell was the name of a royal forester in Yorkshire; the name figures in the fictitious pedigree of Robin Hood.

P. 42. 20. **old October**: *i.e.* ale brewed in that month.

P. 44. ¶ **depending**: distinguish *dépend* from *dépend*.

P. 46. 6. **grinning**: *i.e.* through a halter—a favourite sport. A prize was given for the broadest grin.

23. **the station**: spot from which the shooting took place (lit. standing-place).

P. 49. 18. **the adventure of the abbot of Doubleflask**: see the ballad of *Robin Hood and the Bishop of Hereford*.

P. 50. 1. **Saint Charity**: a saint of the second century; introduced ironically. Cf. 57. 28. She occurs in the *Little Geste*.

P. 51. 9. **distributive justice**: *i.e.* dealing to each his proper share. (A technical term in ethics, Justice being divided into distributive and corrective.)

P. 52. 19. **church militant**: the Church on earth (engaged in constant warfare with its enemies, the powers of evil), as distinguished from the Church triumphant, in heaven. The idea is found in, *e.g.* 'Onward, Christian soldiers.' Here of course the name is used with comic effect.

P. 53. 22. **metaphorical ... arrow**: see 29. 31. **Erotic**: see Glossary.

P. 57. 23. **a chapter of monks**: the daily meeting of the whole convent, held in the chapter-house. Notice Peacock's confusion between monks and friars, and see note on l. 7.

28. **catholic charity**: the same satire as in 50. 1; 70. 4. There is perhaps a play on the original meaning of Catholic (= universal).

P. 60. 21. **nine fighting laymen**: an allusion to the proverb that it takes nine tailors to make a man.

P. 61. 18. **alpha and omega**:  $\alpha$  and  $\omega$ , the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet.

P. 62. 11. **within the range of two miles**: an obvious, and probably intentional, exaggeration, as 86. 18. The average length of a bow-shot was probably 250 yards. 'A good three hundred yards' is given as the shot of 'as keen an archer as any,' in the song on p. 33.

P. 64. 18. **Cerberus**: the three-headed watchdog of the lower world.

24. **knaves and varlets**: of course our ancestors attached no bad meaning to these names. Knave was a boy, varlet a page preparing to become a squire.

P. 64-66. The rescue of William Gamwell is based chiefly on the ballad of *Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne*.

P. 66. 8. **With the sword**: in the ballad 'an Irish knife.'

14. **all on a row**: a phrase often recurring in the ballads.

25. **the sheriff redoubled his speed**, etc. In the ballad he does not escape with his life:

' But he cold neither goe soe fast,  
Nor away soe fast cold runne,  
But Little John with an arrowe soe broad,  
Did cleave his herte in twinne.'

P. 67. 11. **Scarlet**: the name of one of Robin Hood's company; also spelt Scathelock and Scadlock (though the two may possibly not be the same).

P. 70. 2. **episcopal regency**, 1189-1191. The two bishops were appointed Justiciars. See history books.

24. **obtaining possession of the castle of Nottingham**: this is a historical fact (1191).

P. 71. 3. **laureate**: Peacock had a particular dislike of laureates (cf. 81. 31). He explains the name Harpiton as 'a corruption of *Ἐρπετόν*, a creeping thing.'

P. 72. 1. **sat down before**: cf. original meaning of be-siege (Lat. *obsideo*).

7. **machine on wheels** : the *turris* or tower, used in ancient and mediaeval sieges. See a good picture in Harvey's *Castles and Walled Towns of England*, p. 12.

P. 74. 17. **wedge** : the Macedonian phalanx was of this shape.

P. 75. 18. **grey frock** : the Franciscans were Grey Friars ; but we need hardly speculate on the order Friar Tuck adorned.

P. 79. 21. Cf. *As You Like It*, ii. 1.

P. 80. 17. **contributions**, prop. tax levied for support of an army in the field. Of course satirical, as is **virtual representatives** (i.e. the archers are, practically speaking, the M.P.'s for the beasts—would be, if they could hold an election).

P. 81. 11. **illegitimate**, because he 'takes from the rich and gives to the poor.'

19. **excommunicate ... from venison and brawn** : the Church excommunicated from the sacraments.

24. **tax by redemption and tithe by commutation** : i.e. by paying a lump sum and being done with it. Cf. commutation of feudal service. See 90. 15. Commute is used in its ordinary sense (= change), 106. 29. See also 84. 21, 'commute paternity.'

P. 83. 26. **to**=as, for.

P. 84. 7. **Pile green turf** : perhaps a reminiscence of Hor. *Odes*, III. 8 ('quid velint flores ... miraris, positusque carbo in caespite vivo').

19. **give laws to the flowing tide** : Canute.

P. 86. 15. **yew-bough** : specially good for the bow. Hence the great number of yews planted in England. •

24. **angels** : a play on the name of the coin (angel-noble), so called from showing Michael slaying the dragon. Its value varied from 6s. 8d. to 10s.

P. 87. Peacock probably took this code of laws from two old plays, *The Downfall and The Death, of Robert, Earl of Huntingdon* (1601).

P. 88. 13. **Equity** (lit. fairness). Equity now exists, as a corrective, by the side of Common (or Statute) Law.

28. **drones** : cf. *Henry V.* I. ii. 204. The metaphor is as old as Plato (*Rep.* 552 c).

P. 89. 1. **bishops and abbots** : cf. 49. 2. •

'These bishops and these archbishops,  
Ye shall them beat and bind ;  
The High Sheriff of Nottingham,  
Him hold ye in your mind.'

(*Little Geste.*)



**The Sheriff of Nottingham**, as being responsible for the king's peace in the county, was the natural enemy of the foresters of Sherwood. There are several different accounts of his death in the ballads.

P. 89. 5. **postmen**: there was naturally no Post Office then. There seems to have been some primitive service in the reign of Edward III.

Cf. 'But look ye do no husband [husbandman] harm  
That tilleth with his plough.  
No more ye shall no good yeoman  
That walketh by green-wood shaw ; [grove]  
Nor yet no knight nor no squiër  
That will be a good fellow.'

(*Little Geste.*)

21. **nor shall any company**, etc. : see note on p. 4. 14.

31. **a mark**: 13s. 4d.

P. 90. 2. **Carried by acclamation**: by cheering, with no need for counting.

P. 91. 10. **Barnsdale**, a forest region in the W. Riding of Yorkshire, between Pontefract and Doncaster. A favourite resort of Robin in the ballads, as was also Plumpton Park in Cumberland.

23. **suits of green**:

'For ye have scarlet and green, master,  
And many a rich array ;  
There is no merchant in merry England  
So rich, I dare well say.'

(*Little Geste.*)

31. **Marian was absolute**: in her intention to go.

P. 93. 3. **as pilgrims**: a common disguise. (Cf. *Ivanhoe* and *Marmion*.)

6. **staff and cockle-shell**, etc. : the distinguishing marks of pilgrims. (Cf. *The Friar of Orders Gray* in *Percy's Reliques*):

'And how should I know your true love  
From many another one ?  
O by his cockle hat, and staff,  
And by his sandal shoone.'

The cockle or scallop shells were stuck in the hat. They were connected particularly with the shrine of St. James at Compostella, and their origin accounted for by various legends of that saint. (Thus in France they are called *coquilles de Saint Jacques*.) As, however, they are still borne by pilgrims in Japan, it seems most probable that the custom was derived from their use as a primitive cup, dish, or spoon. (See Chambers, *Book of Days*, ii. 121, 176.)

P. 94. 7. **miniature**: another anachronism, as is the picture suspended on the wall.

P. 95. 15. if not **logically consecutive**: even if it did not necessarily follow.

\* P. 96. 15. **pheasant**: possibly an anachronism. The bird ranked as venison. (See Glossary.)

P. 98. 18. **nut-brown maid**: the title of a well-known ballad.

P. 99. 5. **even more welcome**, etc. Peacock renders satirically the thought in Shenstone's lines:

‘Whoe’er has travelled life’s dull round,  
Where’er his stages may have been,  
May sigh to think he still has found  
The warmest welcome at an Inn.’

P. 101. 8. **adherent of Longchamp**: cf. p. 70. 20.

P. 103. 10. Notice the excellent picture of the scene as lit up by the light from the door.

P. 104. 8. **an Amazon**: a race of warlike women, who fought at Troy. (Adj. Amazonian, 105. 3.)

**missed her pass**: i.e. her thrust (a fencing term).

P. 107. 10. **a cup too low**: in low spirits.

P. 108. 17. **Marian often killed the deer**: as e.g. in Ben Jonson’s *Sad Shepherd*.

22. **exclusively**: an exaggeration, since the three prayers or masses which he heard every morning are thus described in the *Little Geste*:

‘The one in worship of the Father,  
The other of the Holy Ghost,  
The third was of Our dear Lady  
That he loved alder-most’ [most of all].

Hence his great courtesy to women. (Cf. note to p. 4. 14.)

P. 109. 5. **Saint Botolph**: see note on p. 12. 14.

29. **My master has tarried**, etc.

‘Welcome be thou to greenè wood,  
Hendè [gracious] knight and free;  
My master hath abiden y<sup>e</sup> in fasting  
Sir, all these hours thre.’

• (Little Geste.)

P. 113. 13. ‘**in maiden meditation, fancy free**’: *Midsummer-Night’s Dream*, II. i. 164.

16. **his stars**: belief in astrology was then prevalent. What survivals of its language are there in modern English?

M.M.

P. 114. 26. **cygnet** :

‘Swans and pheasants they had full good,  
And fowls of the rivere.’

Cf. note on p. 96. 15. **numble-pie** : see Glossary.

P. 115. For this whole story of Sir William (or Richard) at the Lee, and most of its details, see the *Little Geste*. Tennyson’s *Foresters* has the same source.

15. **His lands were in jeopardy** : i.e. mortgaged, ‘set to wed.’ (Cf. Scots *wadset*.)

28. **We sought and found it** : S. Matthew vii. 7.

P. 122. According to the old tradition Robin lived till the age of 87. He met his end in 1247, through the treachery of his kinswoman, the Prioress of Kirklees, who allowed him to bleed to death. See the ballad of *The Death of Robin Hood*. His so-called grave may still be seen at Kirklees, near Huddersfield. (Chambers, *Book of Days*, ii. 607.)

## GLOSSARY

- abet** (24. 15), assist a criminal.
- aerie** (30. 21), eagle's nest (also eyrie).
- agency** (21. 5), the part played by anyone.
- akimbo** (6. 2), with hands on hips.
- alb** (1. 1), a white vestment, longer than a surplice, and with close-fitting sleeves (*L. albus*).
- allegations** (57. 20), charges.
- allegro** (44. 19), in lively time (*Ital.*) *allegretto*, rather lively.
- alley** (113. 11), orig. (as here) a path in forest or park (*Fr. allée*).
- approved** (120. 30), confirmed, proved.
- appurtenances** (39. 9), belongings.
- asylum** (96. 19), sanctuary, refuge (*e.g.* the Capitol under Romulus). *V.B.*—Orig. no notion of a place for lunatics.
- attach** (3. 18), prop. seize goods of a man guilty (esp. of treason); also to arrest the traitor. (*Cf.* 6. 15.)
- attainted** (7. 16), subject to the penalty of attainder, by which (as a punishment, esp. for treason) a man became outlaw, his property was confiscated, etc.
- attendant** (48. 9), accompanying.
- aurum potable** (10. 1), drinkable gold. A cordial or medicine made of tiny particles of gold in oil.
- avoid** (57. 10), make void, evacuate.
- ban** (3. 22), a formal prohibition, esp. that of the Church. (*See temporal.*)
- baron** (18. 8), a double sirloin of beef undivided.
- basta** (8. 1), enough! stop! (*Ital.*).
- basting ladle** (102. 16), a large spoon used for pouring fat over a roasting joint.
- bastion** (73. 25), projecting part of fortification.
- beeves** (8. 17), plur. of beef. Here of cattle.

**belligerent** (107. 28), opponent (Lat. *bellum gerere*).

**bidden** (110. 1), invited.

**boss** (75. 9), round metal knob on centre of shield.

**buttery** (19. 23), storeroom for provisions (= bottlery, Fr. *bouteillerie*, as butler = bottler).

**buttress** (73. 25), support built against a wall.

**canary** (9. 31, *et passim*), a sweet wine, made on the Canary Islands; something like Madeira. (An anachronism, as the Canaries were unknown to the mediaeval world until 1334.)

**capriccio** (36. 22), an irregular or whimsical piece of music.

**catch** (32. 20), a song for several voices, arranged like, *e.g.* 'Three Blind Mice.'

**chase** (78. 7), unenclosed land, in which game is bred and hunted. (Cf. Cannock Chase.)

**choleric** (18. 9), irritable. (From the theory of the Four Elements.)

**cinctured** (75. 19), girded.

**circumvolution** (16. 1), roundabout way.

**canonically** (2. 15), in accordance with canon or church law. (Cf. 15. 25.)

**cock and bull story** (56. 25), extravagant, incredible tale.

**coil** (11. 4), disturbance, noise. (Hamlet's 'this mortal coil' = the turmoil of life.)

**coit** (34. 16, 46. 5), = quoit (still pronounced coit).

**conglobate** (76. 27), form into a ball.

**convene** (87. 1), assemble.

**convention** (107. 1), agreement.

**coronal** (82. 13), garland.

**correspondence** (96. 9), agreement.

**cullender** (102. 19), a perforated vessel used in cooking. Orig. colander. (Cf. percolate.)

**coz** (45. 17), short for cousin.

**demisemiquaver** (2. 22), the shortest note in music.

**discobolic** (38. 1), like a discobolus, or quoit-thrower.

**dissipate** (98. 2), dispel.

**Dominus vobiscum** (65. 30), 'the Lord be with you.'

**ebullition** (20. 11), sudden outburst; lit. boiling over.

**economy** (119. 28), here in its orig. sense of house-management.

- en militaire** (19. 31), military fashion.
- ensconce** (58. 28), establish oneself in a safe or secret place.  
Usually reflexive (as 99. 29).
- erotic** (53. 23), connected with love.
- ethereal** (26. 12), lit. of the upper air, so heavenly. (Ether, the fifth element, of which, according to Aristotle, the heavenly bodies were made; hence quintessence.)
- euphonise** (109. 5), change into a form more easily pronounced.
- familiar** (106. 8), spirit, demon attending on witch.
- fay** (119. 25), = faith.
- flash-boards** (34. 11), or flush-boards, for sending more water from mill-dam into mill-race.
- frock** (11. 17), monk's long gown; so, the character of monk.
- forest** (1. 9. etc.), 'Crown land reserved for purposes of the chase, and, as such, cultivated and inhabited on sufferance if at all.' (*Dict. Eng. Hist.*)
- Galloway** (14. 5), a small, hardy breed of horse (from Galloway).
- gelid** (122. 3), cool (lit. icy).
- ghostly** (5. 7, *et passim*), spiritual. (Cf. Holy Ghost.)
- graft** (54. 3), bough; lit. graft.
- gramercy** (20. 19), many thanks (*Fr. grand merci*).
- green** (22. 6), fresh, recent (of a wound).
- hale** (32. 26), robust. (Same word as whole.)
- hark-away** (33. 29), a call to hounds. (Cf. to hark back.)
- heinous** (7. 9), atrocious; lit. hateful.
- homily** (11. 8), sermon.
- hoyden** (10. 11), a noisy girl.
- implicit** (38. 5), absolute, unreserved.
- imperturbability** (25. 1), calm.
- infallible** (37. 12), certain, without any mistake.
- in terrorem** (34. 16), Lat. as a warning.
- juncture** (103. 25), joint, of armour.
- labyrinthine** (113. 4), intricate, hard to find the way in. (From the labyrinth or maze built for Minos by Daedalus.)
- latent** (37. 23), hidden. (Cf. latent heat.)
- lay the country** (91. 16), hunt. (Perhaps from 'laying' the hounds on.)

**leading-strings** (35. 6), in which children were formerly taught to walk.

**let** (89. 7), hinder. (Still used in tennis.)

**lex talionis** (8. 20), law of tit for tat: 'an eye for an eye' (Lat. *talis*).

**lief**, I had as (65. 18), I should as gladly. *N.B.*—Not 'I would as lief.'

**liege lord** (29. 20), prop. a feudal superior; here = husband.

**Lincoln green** (21. 28), green cloth, made at Lincoln. (Cf. 91. 23.)

**maintenance** (121. 10), enough to support life.

**mal à propos** (37. 27), not to the purpose. (Cf. Sheridan's *Mrs. Malaprop*.)

**mass** (14. 28), as oath, = by the mass.

**matin** (32. 29), the first service in the day, properly at midnight, but often at daybreak.

**Mawd** (45. 17), or Maud, short for Matilda.

**merrymen** (50. 22), here simply = inhabitants. Often, like merryandrew = jester. (Cf. *The Yeomen of the Guard*.) [Merry orig. meant only 'agrecable, pleasing.' See L. P. Smith's *The English Language*, p. 142.]

**minute** (94. 1), disting. from minute.

**miscall** (89. 24), call by a wrong name. (Cf. 118. 13, where there is also the sense of calling a bad name.)

**mollify** (24. 11), soften (usually trans.).

**mote** (84. 13), meeting. Witenagemot = meeting of the wise.

**mummy**, beaten into a (102. 19) = to a shapeless mass.

**mystery** (117. 2), handicraft, a word connected with the guilds. (From Lat. *ministerium*.) Probably with a play on the other word.

**nice** (39. 14) = fastidious. (92. 6) = requiring careful discrimination.

**numble-pie** (114. 26), numbles = inwards or tripe of deer. Cf.  
'Bread and wine they had enough,  
'And ramble of the deer.'  
(*Little Geste of Robin Hood*.)

**overshot** (34. 7), driven by water which shoots over from above.

**pad** (11. 9) = pad-nag, an easy-paced horse.

**palpable** (82. 30), easily perceived (lit. = that can be felt).

**panacea** (10. 2), universal remedy.

- panegyric** (9. 13), praise.
- paragon** (10. 6), model of excellence.
- penitent** (33. 19), one doing penance under direction of confessor.
- pericardia** (30. 2), the membrane round the heart.
- perlustration** (40. 12), thorough investigation (lit. wandering through).
- perquisite** (90. 28), casual profit, something beyond regular revenue.
- pipe** (6. 15), measure of wine, prop. a cask of 105 gallons.
- pipkin** (97. 19), earthenware pot.
- posse** (51. 28), body of men (*posse comitatus*=all men above 15 years of age in a county, who may be summoned by the sheriff to repress riot). (Infin. of *possum*.)
- pot-valiant** (106. 22), valiant because drunk.
- preferment** (39. 29), promotion.
- presence** (113. 19), used esp. of attendance on royalty.
- presto** (44. 20), Ital. quick; superl. *prestissimo*.
- prevent** (107. 27), almost in original sense of 'go before.'
- privity** (18. 19), knowledge.
- psalmody** (2. 23), art of singing psalms.
- quorum** (88. 23), minimum number of members to make a meeting valid. (Gen. plur. of Lat. *qui*.)
- radii**, of a wheel (76. 25), spokes (the Latin meaning).
- read** (54. 11)=rede, advise. (Cf. *Ethelred the Redeless*.)
- recondite** (98. 9), hidden away.
- redundancy** (121. 16), what is more than enough, in excess.
- refect** (20. 23), refresh. (Cf. refectory of a monastery.)
- refection** (6. 24), meal.
- rhetoric** (110. 19), art of speaking impressively.
- right line** (76. 26), straight line. (Cf. right angle; to go right for a thing.)
- rood** (90. 5), the Cross. (Cf. rood screen, rood loft, etc.)
- runagate** (8. 22), vagabond; lit. runaway.
- sap** (117. 15), undermine. (Cf. sappers and miners; to sap one's strength.)
- scepticism** (95. 29), the refusing to believe.
- sconce** (60. 9), head (from an old meaning of the word=helmet).
- scot free** (89. 12), without paying scot (=tax).



**cellarer** (49. 20)=cellarer, the officer in a monastery who looked after the wine and provisions.

**sensorium** (95. 9), here=brain (as seat of sensation).

**shrewd** (111. 14), sharp, biting.

**shrievalty** (64. 23), the office of sheriff. Sheriff (=shire reeve), the officer who was responsible for the peace of the county.

**shrive** (54. 6), to hear confession and absolve from sin ; common on Shrove Tuesday. (Cf. short shrift.)

**sine qua non** (39. 15), indispensable condition.

**spit** (102. 15), spike on which meat was roasted. (Cf. turnspit.)

**square** (91. 6), to fit in with ; *e.g.* to square practice with principle.

**stentorophonic** (87. 4), loud-voiced, from Stentor, the herald in the Trojan war. (Usually stentorian.)

**stoure** (54. 4), strong.

**sue up** (12. 24), press for payment in court, prosecute.

**summary** (19. 15), without unnecessary detail ; so, brief, quick, sudden.

**surety** (27. 10), one who makes himself responsible, goes bail for, another.

**superinduced** (6. 29), added over and above.

**tabor** (42. 3), a small drum. (Same origin as tambourine.)

**temporal** (3. 21), of this life, secular ; opp. to spiritual. (See *ban.*)

**tenour** (62. 18), **tenor** (98. 16), prevailing course.

**testy** (36. 2), irritable, touchy.

**underanged** (69. 5), not upset.

**venison** (29. 1, *et passim*), technically : ' the hart, the hind, the hare, the boar, the wolf, which are beasts of forest ; the buck, doe, fox, marten, which are beasts of chase ; the rabbit, pheasant, partridge, quail, mallard, heron, etc., which are beasts and fowls of warren ' (*Dict. Eng. Hist.*).

**vernal** (122. 9), of the spring ; *e.g.* vernal equinox.

**vert** (29. 1), trees, underwood, and shrub, in royal forest.

**vi et armis** (12. 20), by force of arms (cf. 71. 13) ; lit. by force and arms (as 56. 30).

**vicarious** (121. 16), carried out by another. (Cf. vicar, vice-captain, etc.)

- villify** (24. 21), speak ill of ; lit. make cheap (orig. sense of vile).  
**virago** (10. 11), violent woman ; lit. female warrior (Lat. *vir*).  
**vista** (39. 18), long narrow view, especially between trees.  
**watch and ward** (59. 20), orig. = guard by night and day ; now =  
watch very carefully.  
**wight** (60. 29), person, being.  
**wild-flesh** (49. 29), venison.  
**wot** (109. 31), pres. of to wit = know. (Cf. unwitting.)

## EXERCISES AND SUBJECTS FOR ESSAYS

1. (a) Form abstract nouns from the following : outlaw, rotund, soldier, sheriff, barbarous, courteous, acquiesce, neutral, intrude, superfluous.  
(b) Form adjectives from : archbishop, monk, habit, monarch, militate.
2. Explain the following ecclesiastical terms : canonical, temporal, ghostly, abbey, chapter, orthodox, sacrilege.
3. Write sentences to show the meaning of :  
(a) tact, panegyric, temperament, dilemma, scepticism, asylum, rhetoric, epithet, surety, economy.  
(b) heinous, magnanimous, prolific, choleric, ambiguous, expedient, latent, tangible, circumstantial, extenuating, mutual [is it rightly used on p. 109. 2?], vicarious, reciprocal, opprobrious, palpable.  
(c) with impunity, on parole, *sine qua non*, the alpha and omega, lords temporal and spiritual.
4. Give examples of :  
(a) simile (see, e.g. p. 3. 7).  
(b) metaphor (see, e.g. p. 34. 6, and note ; p. 53. 23).  
(c) play of words (pun) (see, e.g. p. 22. 5).
5. Describe, with quotations, the characters of Robin, Marian, and Friar Tuck. Which of them do you suppose to be the real hero of the book ?
6. Peacock described *Maid Marian* as (1) comic, (2) satirical. (See Introduction, p. ix.) Explain, by quotations, what he meant by each of these terms.
7. Why cannot *Maid Marian* be called a historical novel ? [Those who have read *Ivanhoe* might answer this question by comparing the two books in (1) story, (2) language. Another interesting comparison is that between Friar Tuck and the Clerk of Copmanhurst. (See *Ivanhoe*, chapters 16, 17, 41.)]

## EXERCISES AND SUBJECTS FOR ESSAYS , 139

8. Write an essay on the doctrine that Might is Right. (See pages 87, 117, etc.).

9. Why would outlaws such as Robin Hood be impossible now ?

10. Compare the first article of Equity (p. 88) with modern methods of 'levelling' (syndicalism, strikes, etc.).

11. Discuss Friar Tuck's comparison of King Richard and Robin Hood ? (p. 117). Do you think it fair ?

12. An imaginary adventure of Robin Hood and his merry men.

13. Suppose that in a dream you found yourself wandering in a forest, and that you came upon Robin Hood and his company and had some talk with them. Describe the dream.

14. Maid Marian writes a letter to an old friend describing her life in the forest.

15. A song in praise of the woods in spring-time.

## HELPS TO FURTHER STUDY.

1. **Ballads**: (1) 'The Little Geste of Robin Hood' can be obtained as 'Robin Hood,' in the Oxford Select English Classics (price 3d.). A most useful companion for any form reading *Maid Marian*.

(2) *The Oxford Book of Ballads*, ed. Quiller-Couch. (Clarendon Press. 6s. net.) Contains many Robin Hood ballads.

(3) *The Ballad Book*, ed. Allingham. (Macmillan. 2s. 6d. net.) Contains an excellent Introduction.

(4) Percy's *Reliques* has a few of the ballads; Ritson's Collection (2 vols., 1795) of course has all, and a long Introduction. For the life of Robin Hood see also Chambers, *Book of Days*, ii. 606, and *The Gentleman's Magazine Library* (ed. Gomme, 1885), the vol. on English Tradition, Lore, p. 82.

(5) Two charming poems by Mr. Alfred Noyes, 'Sherwood' and 'A Night in Sherwood,' are based on the Robin Hood ballads.

### 2. **Peacock**:

(1) Works, ed. Saintsbury. 5 vols. (Macmillan. 2s. 6d. each.) The vol. containing *Maid Marian* has a memoir of Peacock.

(2) Novels and Poems. 3 vols. (Routledge. 1s. net each.)

(3) Article by Dr. Richard Garnett in *Dictionary of National Biography*.

### **Larger Books**:

(4) Life, by Carl von Doren. (Dent. 7s. 6d. net.)

(5) Peacock, a Critical Study, by A. M. Freeman. (Secker.)

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